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**Bullies in Greek Cypriot State Primary Schools: a  
problem or a challenge?**

**by**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of Warwick, Institute of Education

2004

*To my parents.*

**“ Daydreaming with poems is too little.  
Making policies is too much.**

**At the end of the day, the world is just a cluster of materials.  
The final result depends on us, on how good or bad architects we are. The  
Heaven or the Hell we will build [...] our fate is, however, in our hands.”**

### Odysseas Elytis, "Speech to the Academy of Stockholm"

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## **Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgements are due to a number of people who have helped to make this project a reality through their encouragement or more practical forms of help. First of all, I should like to express my thanks to all the children, parents, teachers, head teachers and inspectors who participated in this study for letting me be a part of their life. I will also wish to thank a number of people who contributed each one in their own way in the completion of this study: Dr. Leonidas Kyriakides for his support during the first stages of the research part of this study; Prof. Dan Olweus for the gift of the Olweus' Bully/Victim Questionnaire for children; Rev. Dr. Adamantios Avgoustides and Professor Stavros Mpaloyiannis for their advice during the literature review; Rev. Vasilios Thermos for his ideas in the early stages of this study; my dearest friend Agathi Karaoli for having the patience to do all the IQ tests, Mr. Grigoris Choplaros for his willingness to permit the conduct of this research in the primary schools in Nicosia, Mrs. Evanthia Papasavva for giving me the permission to obtain the necessary information from all the relevant archives of the Department of Social Services in Nicosia; Dr. Dimitra Hartas for her encouragement and support the last three years of this study and all my housemates for tolerating my closed door.

Finally, I am most grateful to Professor Geoff Lindsay whose fatherly care, constant encouragement, support, reassurance and patience in difficult times were valuable gifts for me throughout this 'journey'. I especially thank him for always being there and for never letting me feel as 'a distance learner' in this procedure.

## **Abstract**

Bullying in State Greek Cypriot Primary Schools has been receiving a subsequent media attention in recent years. However, there is still not adequate research evidence on this issue. This study is an attempt to examine whether bullying could be considered as a form of aggressive behaviour, to investigate the situation in State Greek Primary Schools in Cyprus and to examine the developmental history, the psychological and social characteristics of nine 11-year-old bullies in State Greek Cypriot Primary Schools. These investigations were undertaken on the basis of four models: the Proposed Model of Aggression, the Model of the Empirical Work, the Model of Parents' Perceptions about the bullies or bullying and the Model of the Teachers' Perceptions about bullies or bullying.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods and comprised two stages. In Stage 1 a survey was undertaken of the teachers' perceptions about bullying in 29 state primary schools in Nicosia. Pupil perceptions were surveyed in three schools where the levels of bullying seemed to be higher than in the rest of the schools. In Stage 2 a sample of 9 boys were identified as bullies from these 3 schools with high levels of bullying and these formed the case studies. An investigation of the nine boys' developmental history, psychological and social characteristics was undertaken through interviewing their parents, teachers and peers and by the use of standardised tests and role play.

This investigation of the nine case studies provided support for the view that bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour as all the factors that are reported in the relevant literature about aggression seem to play a role in its development, albeit to a different extent and in different combinations in the nine bullies. Moreover, bullying was found to occur in all State Greek Cypriot Primary Schools regardless of the social background of the school. Many factors related to the bullies' psychological and social characteristics are involved in an act of bullying and consequently each has to be seriously taken into consideration, both individually and in combination, in any effort aiming at the prevention or inhibition of the problem in schools.



# **Bullies in Greek Cypriot State Primary Schools: a problem or a challenge?**

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **An accidental meeting**

*In April 1998 I was visiting the State Prisons in Nicosia to deliver a package of sweets and clothes sent by the Association of Christian Women for the prisoners. While I was waiting for the permission to enter the main building a police car arrived at huge speed. Two policemen got out of the car, opened the back door and a young man, who could hardly walk, came out. Holding him on both sides, as his hands were tight with handcuffs and bandages, the three of them were proceeding towards the entrance. I looked at the young man and suddenly realised that it was **him**. Panayiotis was living next to my grandmother's house. As a child I remembered him always shouting, kicking, hitting, biting, accusing and swearing at others. He was a terror at home and at school. His best game was to torture cats and dogs and stealing eggs from the farms nearby. I used to play with him mostly because I was afraid of him. He was named as "The bully" in the village, and later as 'Al Capone', on behalf of the well-known criminal. Now nobody remembers his real name since the media also refer to him as 'Al Capone'. After spending most of his life in and out of prison he was convicted for life as he was found guilty for two murders. Panayiotis and the policemen passed in front of me. My stomach was aching and I felt panicked. He looked at me as he*

*passed. I smiled at him but he did not seem to have any contact with the environment. “ This is his fourth attempt at suicide”, the policeman in the entrance said to me as he was closing the iron door behind them. “Can I see him later?...just for a few minutes...” I asked. “I am afraid no, miss”, the policeman replied. “ We have him in isolation. He has become very dangerous lately.”*

## **1. Key theoretical Issues**

In recent years bullying in schools has often been brought onto the agenda of many educational conferences and seminars in Cyprus. Apparently, not only teachers but the media as well, have a considerable and increasing interest in bully/victim problems in Greek Cypriot State Primary schools.

In other countries the problem of bullying was recognised much earlier in the early 70s and since then it has been receiving substantial research attention (Alsaker and Brunner, 1999; Besag 1989; Charach et al.,1995; Harachi et al.,1999; Hirano,1991 (as cited in Smith et al., 1999); Mellor, 1993; Olweus 1978).

Nevertheless, despite the realisation of the problem, there has not yet been any research evidence on the issue of school bullying in Cyprus. This fact, in combination with my experience of dealing with the problem as a primary school teacher in Cyprus, was my first stimulus for beginning this study.

Of course, there are many factors involved in an act of bullying. Leaving the prison yard that afternoon I was thinking that before Panayiotis, and young

offenders like him, had become the main issue in the media news bulletin they had probably been the main issue in the staff meeting of the schools they passed through. But how could their educational experience prevent incidents like the one I witnessed that afternoon? What is the focus of the educational process for these persons? The person or the behaviour? Where is our interest as educationalists, in the “sinner” or the “sin”? Are we attempting to heal the “the patient” or “the illness”? These questions were wandering in my mind for days. If education is to make a real difference in the quality to peoples’ lives then the centre of the educational process should be the person as a psychosomatic integrity. This is what children bring to school to be subjected to the educational process and this is what remains after school for their whole lifetime as a sense of self. A person’s behaviour is not the person itself. It is rather the manifestation of the way the psychosomatic integrity functions within each person’s uniqueness at a specific time and in a specific place. Behaviour changes according to time, place and the way persons anticipate personal experience of themselves and others. Thus, a child in one school may be regarded as a bully but not regarded as such in another school. These considerations led me to decide that in this study I would deal with the bully as a person by looking at bullying behaviour.

### **1.1 Why dealing with the bully?**

The legitimization of choosing bullies as the subject of interest in this study lies primarily in the following reasons.

Firstly, in my interaction with my colleagues I often realise that from the teacher’s perspective the problem of bullying is identified with bullies

themselves. Bullies are not regarded as persons who may have problems but as being “the problems of the school”. In some cases teachers refuse to teach in certain classes because of the particular pupil’s behaviour. Their refusal often creates problems in their relationship with other teachers and in the planning of the school timetable. In addition, younger teachers often report that they consume much of their time dealing with the bullies to the disadvantage of the rest of the class. However, they often become disappointed since they realise that spending a lot of time with the bullies affects negatively their educational effectiveness. Moreover, they often admit their weakness to find an effective way with long lasting effects to deal with them.

Finally, despite their increasing interest teachers seem to have difficulties in contextualising the problem and in specifying the behavioural characteristics of the bully. They also present a difficulty in identifying different forms of bullying and in differentiating them from other phenomena that are associated with but are different from bullying e.g. hyperactivity. Thus, they simplify the issue by labelling the bullies as “special needs” children. Certainly, bullies may have their “special needs”. However, the existence of bullies’ “special needs” should not necessarily be followed by the presence of learning difficulties. Sending the bullies to the special needs teacher often makes them feel unwanted and, consequently, raises their defensiveness.

Thus, dealing exclusively with the bullies in this study will enable me:

- a) to investigate in depth their developmental history (temperamental predispositions, early year experiences, family background, life events relationship with parents, home conditions etc.) through interviewing their family members
- b) to explore the “social atmosphere” in their classroom through interviewing their teachers and peers.
- c) to detect their psychological characteristics

Nevertheless, the teacher’s difficulty to specify and contextualise the characteristics of the bullies implies a necessity of formulating a definition of the bully or the bullying behaviour.

## **1.2 Defining bullies or bullying behaviour?**

There are two ways of dealing with the issue of definition. One is by defining individuals as bullies and the other one is looking at behaviour that could be described as bullying.

The first approach raises issues regarding the definition of the person, since teachers usually talk about bullies and distinguish them from non-bullies. However, a definition of a person can only be achieved with the assumption that we can completely get to know the person in an absolute and definite way. This task seems to be unrealistic since human existence is subjected into a process of continuous development and change which is affected by a variety of factors

internal and external to the human nature. In addition, defence mechanisms and other personal inhibitions would obstruct the bully's self-disclosure and, consequently, the manifestation of the basic components that construct the bully's character. Moreover, a potential interference of prejudices on behalf of the researcher throughout the procedure of investigating the bully's personality would most probably lead to overgeneralisations. Finally, a pre-determined definition of a bully person would hinder the realisation of them as different from what they are supposed to be. For example a bully could be a victim at the same time but in a different environment. Thus, we have to question and challenge our own beliefs of what a bully might be in order to be able to re-search for the bullies' reality. The attempt to define a bully can only be limited to the identification of the bullies according to certain criteria and in order to investigate their psychological and social background.

The second approach raises the issue of subjectivity. In an incident of bullying behaviour there are many factors involved, either as observers or as participants. Each one of them experiences and regards aggression in a different way and, consequently, defines aggression according to their own perceptions. In addition, bullying behaviour can take different forms in different environments according to the factors that determine the bully's relationships with others. However, a definition of bullying behaviour based on the common characteristics that are acknowledged by both the participants or the observers would enable a more holistic and objective approach to deal with the issue of definitions.

In this study a combination of the two approaches will be employed taking into consideration their potentialities and their constraints. A focus on a definition of *bullying behaviour*, rather than of a *bully*, would be more suitable to start with in phase 1 of this study since it will provide the participants with a clear understanding of what they are to respond to and address the concerns outlined above concerning holistic definitions of a person on the basis of a narrow focus (in this case ‘the bully’). Moreover, an attempt to “define” bullies will be initiated during phase 2 through identifying the bully’s psychosocial characteristics.

### **1.3 Defining bullying behaviour**

There are a variety of definitions of bullying behaviour in the current literature on bullying (Besag, 1989; Olweus, 1999; Sharp and Smith, 1994; Tattum and Herbert, 1990). Children who called the ChildLine emphasised the effects of bullying rather than the intentions of the bullies (La Fontaine, 1991).

Seemingly, bullying behaviour can be defined according to the actions of the bully and the impact they have on the victim. These two parameters seem to be interrelated in theory. In addition, the intentions of the bully are also a central component in defining an act as “bullying”. However, as observers we can *see* actions, but we can only *infer* intentions. Thus, the perceptions of the victim are also important as they can provide further supportive evidence of what we cannot see, namely the intentions and expectations of the bully. Nevertheless, in some cases the victims may not acknowledge the negative effect bullying has on them for several reasons. They may not realise that they have been bullied, they may

neglect bullying behaviour or they may even not know how and whom they should talk to about being bullied. The fact that children may seem incapable of coping effectively with bullying does not mean that the problem does not exist. It rather means that this is an issue that has to be taken seriously into consideration while investigating the role of the teachers and parents.

In Olweus's (1999) definition, which was derived from an earlier large-scale, longitudinal research in Scandinavia, bullying is characterised by the following three criteria: “ a) it is aggressive behaviour or ‘intentional harm doing’ b) which is carried out ‘repeatedly and over time’ c) in an interpersonal relationship characterised by an imbalance in power” (Olweus, 1999, p.12-13). Olweus sees bullying as a subcategory of aggressive behaviour but the characteristics mentioned above distinguish it from ‘violence’ which, according to Olweus (1999), has to do only with the use of physical means in the infliction of harm. However, a bullying act can contain violence when it is initiated by the use of physical means.

In addition, Sharp and Smith (1994) developed an extended and comprehensive definition of bullying. They consider bullying “ as a form of aggressive behaviour which is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is often persistent, sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying behaviour is an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate. It can also be very subtle. Once a pupil or a group of pupils have established a bullying relationship with another pupil or a group of pupils, they may only have to look threateningly to reinforce their fearfulness”. Bullying



is then contextualized in three main forms: “ physical (hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings), verbal (name-calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks), indirect (spreading nasty rumours, excluding someone from social groups).” (Sharp and Smith, 1994). The effects on victims are manifested in terms of “stress related symptoms, low self confidence, low self esteem and lack of consideration” (Sharp and Smith, 1994,p.1-2).

Since the focus of this study will be on these three forms of bullying and the potential reasons that lead to this behaviour the definition given by Sharp and Smith will be the first basis for the investigation of personality and social environment factors by looking at bullies’ behaviour.

#### **1.4 Aggression : an exploration of the term**

The definitions of bullying given by Sharp and Smith (1994) and Olweus (1999) imply that bullying behaviour is strongly rooted to aggression. So, is bullying a form of aggression? Can bullying be non-aggressive? These apparently naïve questions highlight the importance of clearly defining what we are looking at. Thus, a review of literature on the definitions and nature of aggression could enable a better understanding of bullying behaviour.

The variety of definitions of aggression that a reader comes across while reviewing the relevant literature confirms the problem in the development of a concrete definition of aggression. Apparently, this problem is due to two main factors: a) the complexity of human existence from which aggression is derived and b) the fact that aggression affects the whole of the human existence and not

just a part of it. These factors underline the multidimensional character of aggression which, consequently, has been receiving the attention of all different human sciences. As a result theorists dealing with aggression seek a definition of the particular kind of behaviour according to two variables a) the specific section of human existence that they consider as the focus of their scientific enquiry and b) their scientific interests. For example physiologists are seeking a biogenic definition of aggression in body functions, sociologists are searching for a definition related to social factors, psychologists are defining aggression according to the psychological process possibly within the context of social systems e.g. family, school etc. Noticeably, this variety of definitions results from the variety of components each science is focusing on such as motivational assumptions, social norms, physiological functions and personality elements like intentions, goals and expectations. In addition, every scientific theory assumes that it has obtained a complete or almost complete perception of the phenomenon so as it can deal with all its functions. Moreover, every school of theorists have their own perception which they try to associate with the findings of other theoretical schools or attempt to apply their findings in other scientific areas (e.g. physiology-ethology). Thus, it is difficult to derive a clear understanding of a definition of aggression in isolation from the specific theory it represents.

Seemingly, the theorists of aggression in different sciences are in the same position as the five blind men in the old Indian fairy tale who were touching an elephant trying to define what an elephant is. According to the part of the elephant each one was touching they gave five different definitions of the elephant. They all were right but nobody really said what an elephant is!

The confusion goes even further if we consider how many different events common people regard as “aggression”. However, despite that they are named with the same word, there is obviously great difference between a murder and a verbal protestation during a football match. Undeniably, the word “aggression” means different things to different people and in different situations. Moreover, aggression, as well as bullying, is sometimes confused with other forms of antisocial behaviour e.g. drug abuse (Tremblay, 2000).

In conclusion, according to Karli “a scientific discipline will inevitably build up a narrow and mutilating vision of human’s “nature” whenever it claims to totally “explain” on its own the being and evolving of humans” (Karli, 1997, p.13). Consequently, the investigation of the development of aggression in humans could not be restricted to the assumptions of one scientific theory. In addition, since the scientific subject of education is the person as a psychosomatic integrity, then all the human sciences could contribute to the educational process by asserting their own perspective on the problem of bullying in schools as a form of aggressive behaviour. Thus, to obtain a complete idea of the phenomenon of aggression it is necessary to employ a holistic approach in its investigation. To achieve this goal we must look at aggression in all different sections of human existence, as they were studied by the different human sciences and manifested in different scientific theories.

## **Chapter 2: The theoretical aspect of aggression**

In this chapter a review of the relevant literature on aggression will be undertaken. The aim of the literature review is the provision of a broad idea of the phenomenon as it has been investigated by the different human sciences and the manifestation of the research questions for this study.

Since the focus of this study will be on the bully and their actions, the aim of this chapter is to examine the physiological, ethological, psychological and social factors that may affect the aggressor's intentions and actions.

### **1. The physiological factors of aggression**

As research has shown the biological functions of the body are involved in aggressive behaviour and consequently may affect the development or reduction of bullying in children (Clifford et al., 1998; Deckel and Fuqua, 1998; Duan et al., 1996; Ferris et al., 1999; Moyer, 1976; Tremblay et al., 1998). Since these factors are strongly related to the brain functions they can affect not only the person's physiology but the development of their personality as well. In a sense they often determine the person's options, thoughts, choices and intentions during the process of an aggressive act.

However, there are ethical problems in the examination of the human brain functions since some essential issues that are related to the neuroanatomy of aggression can only be investigated with the employment of certain techniques like brain lesions, brain stimulations and pharmacological manipulations. Thus, most of the data on this subject are based on research carried out on animals or

individuals with actual or assumed brain damage. In addition, animals have a less complex nervous system and social structure, therefore, the investigation of aggressive acts in animals is made simpler and clearer. Research in humans requires recognition of the problems of inferring generalisable findings from an impaired sample to a normal population.

Despite the fact that the physiological components are basically the same in every person, they function differently according to the role each person adopts either as an aggressor or as a recipient. Brain functions and generally the role of the nervous system, endocrinology, genetic factors and the use of drugs influence the physiology of a person as an aggressor in an aggressive act. Thus, the physiology of the aggressor is a basic component that determines their intentions and actions.

### **1.1 Neurology of aggression**

The fact that physiological components function differently, according to the person's uniqueness and the particular situation that surrounds them, led to the need for a classification of aggressive actions. Moyer (1976) classified aggressive acts in eight categories and employed a model which led him to the conclusion that aggression is strongly related to the activation of innate systems of neural organisations in the brain which are linked with specific patterns of motor behaviour and with another system in the brain which generates their arousal (Moyer, 1976).

The Moyer classification which is the most widely cited in the relevant literature, offers eight categories: Predatory aggression, inter-male aggression, fear-induced aggression, irritable aggression, maternal aggression, territorial defence, sex-related aggression and instrumental aggression. Moyer's classification is an extensive and broad one. Nevertheless, one can easily realise that there is an overlap between the categories. As Zagrodzka and Fonberg assert, "instrumental aggression" cannot be seen as a separate category since "the instrumental component can be found in all the remaining categories of his classification" (Zagrodzka and Fonberg 1997, p.16). The same idea could be assumed for territorial defence aggression as it can be regarded as a form of fear-induced aggression. Besides, the interaction among different kinds of aggression makes their investigation extremely complex. Consequently, this raises difficulties in the investigation of bullying since the distinction between the different kinds of bullying is not always clear.

In order to overcome this complexity, Moyer employed a model that aimed at "identifying the mechanisms that although differing in detail are similar for all or most aggression types and clarifying some of the mechanisms involved." (Moyer 1976, p.4).

The model as discussed by Geen (1990, pp. 11-12) is based on the following main assumptions:

- a) There are a number of innate systems of neural organisation in the brain, with one such pattern for each kind of aggression.

- b) The activation of the innate systems happens in the presence of particular complexes of stimuli.
- c) There is a system for the generation of arousal which affects both the organism's reactivity to the aforesaid stimuli and the intensity of the aggression stimulated by the innate nervous system.

Moyer in his theory refers to the role of temporal lobe, amygdaloid lesions, the cingulum, thalamus, hypothalamus and fornix in the development of the different kinds of aggressive behaviour in humans (Moyer, 1976,p.58). However, he also asserts the thesis that aggression is the result of an interaction between what is going on in the environment and what is going on at the same time in the nervous system (Moyer, 1976,p.19-20).

In addition, research conducted on animals supports Moyer's findings that the hippocampus and the amygdala play a critical role in the neurological basis of aggression. Duan et al. (1996) used an automated tracking system to assess the behavioural changes elicited by electrical stimulation of the hypothalamic sites that yield the cardiorespiratory components of defence reaction and vigilance reaction in rabbits. Furthermore, Zagrodska et al. (1998) in their experiment with cats examined whether damage to the central nucleus of the amygdala contributes to the predatory like attack sometimes observed in rapid eye movement sleep without atonia (REM-A), created in cats by bilateral pontine lesions. According to the results of their experiment unilateral damage to the central nucleus of the amygdala alone increased affective defensive aggressive behaviour toward humans and other cats without altering predatory behaviour in

wakefulness. Finally, Lubin et al. (2003) found that decreased oxytocin levels in the amygdalas of rat females have been correlated with heightened maternal aggressive behaviour.

Finally, epilepsy is often associated with aggression. Therefore, it is frequently the focus of clinical intervention. According to research evidence aggression can exist due to pathological factors closely related to epilepsy e.g. brain injury or as a side effect of antiepileptic medication. The former, is supported by a study with epileptic adults (Alber et al., 2002) and the latter is supported by two studies with adults using Levetiracetam (LEV) and secondly with children under Prednisone therapy (Dinkelacker et al., 2003; Sinclair, 2003).

## **1.2 Endocrinology of aggression**

Endocrinological factors also play a role in the development of aggression in humans and animals. A variety of research projects conducted on animals and humans support the thesis that serotonin and testosterone affect aggressiveness in animals and humans (Book et al., 2001; Clarke et al., 1999; Coccaro, 2000 (as cited in Lindberg, 2003); Deckel and Fuqua, 1998, Ferris et al., 1999; Gerra et al., 1996; Lindberg, 2003; Ramirez, 2002; Rasanen et al., 1999 (as cited in Lindberg, 2003); Sperry et al., 2003; Tremblay et al., 1998; Van der Vegt et al., 2003)

### **1.2.1 Serotonin and aggression**

Many clinical and preclinical studies have reported the role of serotonin (5-HT) in the control of aggressive behaviour in animals and humans. However, these



studies have contradictory results. Studies of chameleons *Anolis Carolinensis* (Deckel and Fuqua, 1998), golden hamsters (Ferris et al., 1999), passerine species (Sperry et al., 2003) and human newborns (Clarke et al., 1999) support the thesis that serotonin inhibits aggression. However, Van der Vegt et al. (2003) in their study with rats examined whether serotonergic activity is probably increased during performance of aggressive behaviour. Their results showed that performance of aggressive behaviour increases serotonin neuronal activity and that preventing this activation inhibits expression of aggressive behavior. Although the latest data regarding the relationship between serotonin and aggression are contradictory, it seems that there is a link between them that needs further investigation.

### **1.2.2 Testosterone and aggression**

Experiments on the role of testosterone and aggression suggest a significant link between outward directed aggressiveness and high levels of testosterone. Research conducted on humans, and especially adolescents and criminal offenders, support the thesis that high levels of testosterone lead to high levels of aggressive behaviour (Book et al., 2001; Brooks and Reddon, 1996 (as cited in Book et al., 2001); Coccaro, 2000 (as cited in Lindberg, 2003); Gerra et al., 1996; Ramirez, 2002; Rasanen et al., 1999 (as cited in Lindberg, 2003); Tarvyd, 2002, Tremblay et al., 1998; Lindberg, 2003). Research conducted by Tremblay et al. (1998) on adolescents supports the hypothesis that testosterone level and social dominance are strongly related and that this association between testosterone level and physical aggression is probably observed in contexts where physical aggression leads to social dominance. However, Book et al. (2001) in

their experiment with humans report two possible moderators in the relationship between testosterone and aggression: participant age and time of day. Thus, according to their findings, more research needs to be conducted examining the reliability of testosterone measurements at different ages and times of day to permit estimates of statistical power. These measurements should be initiated via repeated measurement and longitudinal designs.

### **1.3 Genetic dispositions and aggression**

Furthermore, the possibility of genetic disposition of human aggression has been broadly discussed in the relevant literature. (Arsenault et al., 2003; Auerbach et al., 2001; For a review see Geen, 1990).

Owing to the ethical problems that hinder the investigation of this issue through selective breeding, research projects conducted in this area have been mainly based on the study of twins. Comparisons between pairs of monozygotic and dizygotic twins have produced higher correlations among monozygotic twins. One of the most widely cited projects on the genetic factors in relation to aggression is that conducted by Christiansen (1974) in Denmark. Christiansen investigated 3,900 identical and fraternal twins in which one of them had been convicted of a crime. He then looked to see if the other twin in each pair also had a criminal record and whether the concordance was greater for identical than for fraternal twins. He reported that both sets of twins were more similar in the incidence of recording criminality than would be expected by chance. The concordance between pair members was greatest when they were identical twins

and were guilty of crimes against the person rather than of property crimes (Christiansen, 1974, (as cited in Geen, 1990)).

Rushton et al. (1986) in a similar investigation with 500 pairs of monozygotic and disygotic twins who responded to questionnaires that assessed five personality traits including aggressiveness, reported higher correlations for monozygotic twins in the case of each personality variable (Rushton et al., 1986, (as cited in Geen, 1990)). In a more recent study, Auerbach et al. (2001) examined the association between two common polymorphisms, the dopamine D4 receptor (DRD4) gene and the serotonin transporter promoter (5-HTTLPR) gene and temperament in 61 infants aged 12 months. They reported that there is a link between these two specific polymorphisms and infant temperament, consistent with dopamine and serotonin neurotransmitter systems activating or inhibiting aggression respectively (Auerbach et al., 2001). Lastly, Arseneault et al. (2003) in their study with 1116 pairs of 5-year-old twins supported the thesis that genetic risks contribute strongly to antisocial behaviour that emerges in early childhood. In contrast, genetic risk is relatively modest for adolescent antisocial behaviour (Arsenault et al., 2003).

Aggression in males was associated with excesses in chromosomal material. Some men have been found to have an extra Y chromosome and are, therefore, referred to as XYY (Geen, 1990). Selmanof and Ginsburg (1981) stated that XYY men possessed sex male hormones in greater than average amounts (Selmanof and Ginsburg , 1981; (as cited in Geen, 1990) ). In this way they supported the idea that the extra Y chromosome was associated with anti-social

aggressive behaviour even among males raised in family environments that manifest no more than average aggressiveness (Price and Whatmore, 1967, (as cited in Geen, 1990)). This opinion was based on studies in which aggressiveness has been inferred from evidence of criminal or antisocial behaviour. Absence of findings that would support a clear association between the XYY type and aggression leaves the status of this concept in doubt (Geen, 1990).

Despite the fact that the evidence for a genetic contribution in the investigation of human aggression consists of conflicting results and methodological uncertainties, it has introduced the notion of “neurogenetic determinism” of aggression in the international debate and has led to the development of ethical considerations manifested through a storm of controversy and protest. A balanced position may be found in the papers to a conference that took place in London in February 1995. Rutter asserted the thesis that “there cannot be a single gene for criminal behaviour, it is possible that genes may affect the ways in which individuals respond to stress, perhaps by contributing to characteristics which alter their susceptibility” (Rutter, 1995). In addition, in the same conference Lyons reported the findings of his study with 3200 male twin pairs according to which “there was a greater degree of heritability for non-violent anti-social behaviour” (Lyons, 1995). Furthermore, Mednick (1995) suggested that “genes can influence behaviour in a probabilistic rather than deterministic way” (Mednick, 1995). Finally, according to Berkowitz (1993), the implication of those studies was that genetic influences contribute relatively little to all the crimes committed, but have a substantial effect on the behaviour of the most anti-social segment of society (Berkowitz, 1993, p. 390). Genetic inheritance is only a

potential for aggressive behaviour. As Berkowitz believes, “this potential will be fulfilled only if the appropriate learning and environmental conditions are also present” (Berkowitz, 1993, p.392). Berkowitz’s ideas were supported by Karli (1997) who proposed the thesis that the idea that some genetically controlled brain region “generates” aggressiveness as “an endogenous driving force appeals to the authorities who are given the difficult task of struggling against aggression by means of psychosurgery or by means of some “anti-aggressive” molecule” (Karli, 1997,p.13).

#### **1.4 Medication and aggression**

In the previous section a reference was made on the issue of drugs in treating epilepsy. In this section the focus will be on drugs that are administered in order to inhibit aggression directly.

The role of medication in the development or reduction of aggression in children with developmental disabilities or behavioural problems has attracted substantial research attention in recent years. The most common therapeutic drugs that are related to the inhibition of aggression and hyperactivity are the following: the major tranquillizers, the minor tranquillizers, the psychostimulants and lithium (Renfrew, 1997).

Prendergast (2000) stresses drug treatment should be considered for children whose behaviour problems are severely incapacitating and should always be assessed with a serial record of the frequency of the target behaviours against a baseline taken before the drug was started. In addition, if a child with challenging

behaviour is under medication, “medication withdrawal should not begin at critical times e.g. the beginning of the school year” (Prendergast, 2000, p.145). However, as reported in the section on epilepsy above, drug treatment can lead to increased aggression (For a review see Prendergast, 2000).

### **Summary**

Research has shown the biological functions of the body are involved in aggressive behaviour and consequently may affect the development or reduction of bullying in children. Brain functions as well as serotonin and testosterone play a critical role in the neurological basis of aggression as they affect aggressiveness in animals and humans. Furthermore, genetic disposition was considered as one of the factors responsible for the development of human aggression. This idea of “neurogenetic determinism” of aggression led to the development of ethical considerations manifested through a storm of controversy and protest. Finally, the role of medication in the development or reduction of aggression in children behavioural problems has attracted substantial research attention in recent years.

Therefore, a holistic approach in the study of bullying in schools, should certainly include the biology of the person in the process of an aggressive act. Does the physiology of the bully play a role in the development of aggression? To what extent and in what ways does this happen? These are the questions that have to be investigated in the study of this phenomenon.

## **2. The ethological factors of aggression**

An ethological approach of aggression would aim at the investigation of the functioning of the physiological mechanisms that influence aggression, so that through an understanding of the function structures it will be possible to eliminate disturbances in their working (Eibl-Eibesfeld, 1971). This is done by means of behavioural research. In this way the development of ethology as a different scientific area correlates the physiological functions with the behavioural patterns that usually occur within the course of an aggressive act.

Ethology asserts an instinct conception of aggression. The work of Lorenz is seminal. Lorenz (1966) believed that instinctive actions are endogenously determined in both animals and human beings and are not reactions to external events. Thus, according to his ideas, the external situation plays a minimal role in the development of the instinctive actions. The situational stimuli only free inhibitory mechanisms in the nervous system. In this way, the internal drive is allowed to “push-out” the instinctive action (Lorenz 1966). According to Lorenz aggression goes off by itself as a result of the pressure of pent-up drive.

It seems that Lorenz investigates aggression as if it can never be subjected to conditioning. One of his followers, Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1971) attempted to develop a more holistic idea of aggression by focusing not only on the innate mechanisms but on the cultural background as well, as the latter leads to the necessity of adaptability. Thus, he sees aggression as a dynamic component that can be modified throughout the evolutionary history of the species (phylogenesis). Viera (2002) supports this idea and refers to the plasticity of

behaviour among species. Plasticity may also vary among distinct behavioural domains in a single species.

Eibl-Eibesfeldt believed that a strong aggressive drive may once have stimulated man's intellectual development, but its excess use today can lead human kind to total self-annihilation. Thus, we cannot accept it simply because it is innate to us. As he asserts "Human beings can employ cultural control patterns to regulate their inborn impulses which allow further adaptability as they can change rapidly when circumstances demand it" (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1971, p.3). In this way he sees alternative ways in dealing with the innate drive of aggression through the empowerment of cultural factors. In the process of ethical investigation Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1971) sees that some of the phylogenetic adaptations are now retained. Since both aggressive and altruistic behaviour are pre-programmed by phylogenetic adaptations, there are preordained norms for our ethical behaviour. Simultaneously, "aggressive impulses in humans are counterbalanced by equally deeply rooted social tendencies" (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1971, p.4).

In addition, in the ethological view, aggression as a pre-programmed behaviour in man and animals is due to four main factors: a) the innate skills: organisms come to this world already equipped with behavioural programmes. They have been programmed in the course of their phylogeny. b) The innate recognition: the ability of animals to react to certain "key stimuli" with prey-catching actions by special mechanisms, the "innate realising mechanisms" (I.R.M.) for receiving and processing stimuli. c) The drives: in animals particular inner drives determine a searching behaviour. Therefore, if an animal is in an aggressive



mood it will look for a rival. This happens because innate behaviour patterns are linked to spontaneously active groups of motor cells in the central nervous system, which constantly produce impulses that impel the organism towards a motor discharge. d) The innate learning disposition: human beings are talented at learning, and so are responsive to specific environmental influences at particular phases of their ontogenetic development. (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1971).

## **2.1 Ritualised fighting**

According to ethologists, the advantages of aggression in humans and animals are gained through ritualised fighting. This, according to Lorenz is a kind of intra-specific aggression in animals aimed at the fulfilment of survival goals and the establishment of social hierarchy (Lorenz, 1964). Ritualised fighting has been observed by other ethologists as well but the role of past experience in its initiation has been discussed in the literature with contradictory conclusions. Barki and Volpato (1998) in their research on aggression in fish, suggest some influence of early experience on decisions made by fish during the course of ritualistic fighting. In contrast to their findings Benus and Rondings (1997) in a study of genetically aggressive and non-aggressive mice concluded that the significant difference in early experience between them due to differential maternal environment hardly contributes to the consistent differences in aggression. Nevertheless, the necessity of making aggression less dangerous during ritualised fighting led to the development of threat behaviour, the independent evolution of intra-specific aggression and the development of bonds (Lorenz, 1964; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1971).

Lorenz (1964) asserts the thesis that “the development of threat behaviour serves to size up the opponent, to measure the fighting potential of one rival against that of the other before damage is inflicted. The combatants must be very equally matched if an actual damaging fight is to take place” (Lorenz, 1964, p. 42). A number of studies conducted on Barbary macaques (Preuschoft et al., 1998), on American lobsters (*Homarus Americanus*) (Karavanich and Atema. 1998), on young cichlids (*Acanthopterygii: Cichlidae*) (Wisenden, 2002), on brook charr (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) (Mirza and Chivers, 2002) and on Iberian rock lizards (*Lacerta monticola*) (Cooper et al., 2003) support this idea.

In addition, according to Lorenz “ the necessity arising for certain individuals to cease from fighting each other in order to combat more effectively other fellow-members of the species led to the development of the bond of personal friendship. The difficult problem arises when the “enemy” to be attacked is a fellow member is solved through the process of redirection. During the process of redirection “aggression evoked by one object, can be easily directed towards another, if inhibitory factors prevent its discharge in the direction of the primary eliciting stimulation” (Lorenz, 1964, p.45). Nevertheless, Anthony et al. (1996) in an experiment with sympatric salamanders (*Plethodon ouachitae* and *P. albagula*) compared levels of aggressive behaviour in intra- and interspecific contexts in the two species. They reported that *P. ouachitae* were more aggressive in both intra and inter-specific contexts.

Furthermore, in the process of evolution of ritualised fighting certain forms of intra-specific aggression have developed independently, although along analogous lines. As Lorenz asserts “these forms achieve the survival functions without doing damage to individuals. For example, some reptiles, like

*Amblyrhynchus cristatus*, never use their mouth and teeth in ritualised fighting. Thus, the particular essential survival function can only be fulfilled when the vanquished individual is as effectively and as permanently subdued as if had suffered serious wounds” (Lorenz, 1964,p. 44). This idea was supported by Nowicki et al. (1998) in the results of their examination of the role of bird song in territory defence. According to their results song functions as a ‘keep out’ signal in song sparrows (Nowicki, 1998).

Moreover, aggressive behaviour was associated in some research projects with gender. Studies conducted on animals reveal that males engage in more aggressive behaviours and interactions than do females and that females are less aggressive (Wortham, 2002). In one of the studies conducted on a tropical passerine bird (*Ploceus cucullatus*) Tarvyd (2002) associates male aggression with testosterone with the development of male aggressive behaviour.

## **2.2 Human ethology**

The approach of comparative biology in the investigation of aggression in humans and animals led ethologists to the recognition of specific elements which differentiate human aggression from aggression in animals. These elements are primarily concerned with the cultural orientation of human behaviour as well as with the establishment of ethical norms of human behaviour (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1971). Since human behaviour is culturally oriented, human aggression is experienced and expressed differently in different cultures. This contrasts with animal aggression. For example the same variety in the expression of aggression was observed in two studies conducted on different variants of cercopithecine

monkeys (*macaca fuscata*, *macaca nigra*, *papio papio*) (Petit et al., 1996) and common cuckoos (Moskat, 2002).

The cross cultural character of aggression has led to wide disagreement about the nature of human aggression. Much of the confusion is due to the different use of the term “aggression” by anthropologists and ethologists. As Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1971) stresses: “Anthropologists often use “aggressive” as synonymous with “belligerent” and conceive only warfare as an aggressive act, whereas ethologists deal with the observed behaviour patterns and label as aggressive every act that leads to spacing and subordination” (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1971,p.70). This confusion confirms the obvious difficulty in the formation of a single definition of aggression.

Ethologists study the similarities and differences in aggressive behaviour of many species but generally ignore the individual and group differences in humans. In this sense, efforts to decrease aggression through education are to no avail for them. Thus, they were criticised in a wide range of references (Berkowitz, 1993; Fromm, 1973; Karli, 1997).

Erich Fromm (1973) asserts that: “ man is phylogenetically a non-predatory animal and hence his aggression, as far as its neurophysiological roots are concerned is not of the predatory kind. Man is endowed with a potential aggression which is mobilised by threats to his vital interests [...] Phylogenetically programmed aggression as it exists in animals and man, is biologically adaptive, defensive reaction.” (Fromm, 1973, p.139). He supports

his ideas with evidence from animal behaviour, palaeontological and anthropological surveys.

In addition, Karli (1997) is very reluctant about the extrapolated brain-behaviour relationships from animal species to humans, as the human being cannot be reduced to biological identity and functioning. Thus, he distinguishes three facets in human existence: human as a biological individual, human as a social actor and human as a reflecting and deliberating subject. Each facet carries on a dialogue with its own environment: the organism with the material environment, the actor with the social milieu and the subject with the inner world (Karli, 1997). The three facets share the same brain which takes the role of mediator in the threefold dialogue (Karli, 1997).

Karli (1997) argues that “the neural substrate of aggression” should not be considered as a unitary causal reality or be related to the “aggression instinct” (Karli, 1997). He regards human beings as very exceptionally constrained to resort to an aggression in order to survive. He believes that since human beings also function as social actors, their interactions take place in a culturally determined social system in which human aspirations, values and norms are projected. Thus, the social actor’s life history generates a meaning which is no longer genetically pre-programmed, due to the human interpretation and symbolisation of the experienced events. Finally, as reflecting and deliberating subjects “humans can choose to prosocial rather than to aggressive strategies”. (Karli, 1997,p.8).

Thus, the problem of aggression, according to Karli (1997), is one of social cognition and social emotions. As he states “in the face of a particular situation, a given individual will eventually resort to an aggressive way of coping with it. Only with this determination can we fruitfully analyse all the brain process” (Karli, 1997,p.9). In this way, Karli (1997) reconciles the biological aspect of aggression within its psychosocial perspectives. In addition, his ideas lead to a transition from conceptual to ethical considerations and to a manifestation of a new perspective of brain functions in relation to aggression. His perception fully recognises the importance of the historical dimension in life and the fact that “there are not just one-way relations between brain functioning and behaviour, but the brain undergoes in return the shaping influence of the multifaceted experience that derives from that behaviour” (Karli, 1997,p.10).

Finally, Karli (1997) focuses on the role of education in fighting against “ordinary” aggression. As he asserts such an education should lead “to cognitive, affective and moral maturity, the promotion of social change and the development of measures of social defence” (Karli, 1997, p.13).

## **Summary**

Ethology asserts an instinct conception of aggression. Ethologists, postulate that aggression goes off by itself as a result of the pressure of pent-up drive due to four main factors: the innate skills, the innate recognition, the drives and the innate learning disposition. Ritualised fighting is a kind of intra-specific aggression in animals aimed towards the fulfilment of survival goals and the establishment of social hierarchy. The necessity of making aggression less

dangerous led to the development of threat behaviour, the independent evolution of intra-specific aggression and the development of bonds. Nevertheless, human aggression differs from animal aggression because of its cultural orientation and the establishment of ethical norms.

This instinct conception of aggression and the critical debate that followed it raise a number of basic questions about bullying in schools. Are the intentions of the bully due to an aggressive drive innate to them? Is bullying in schools associated with the maintenance of social hierarchy in the classroom and with gender roles? How is threat expressed throughout the context of a bullying act? Can bullies redirect their anger to something or someone else in order to sustain a relationship that is vital to them? Can a child become aggressive in order to survive in their environment? To what extent can education interfere in order to control bullying in schools? An observation of the bully's behaviour at school and the way they interact with others in their environment would help to address these questions.

### **3. The psychological factors of aggression**

There are a variety of psychological theories on aggression each one seeking for a different explanation of this phenomenon. In this study Psychoanalytic theory, the Behaviouristic approach and the theory of Personal constructs will be reviewed.

#### **3.1 Psychoanalytic theory**

It seems that there is a connection between the Freudian perspective of aggression and the ethological view mentioned above. In the Psychoanalytic

Theory, as it was introduced by Sigmund Freud aggression is a constantly flowing impulse rooted in the human organism and not a reaction to external stimuli. In the first phase of his work Freud saw aggression as a component of sexual instinct. Later, he manifested a dichotomy between life and death instincts (Freud, 1920).

Following her father's theory, Anna Freud saw sex as representative of the life force and aggression of the destructive force (Freud, 1949). In the same way, Melanie Klein, as a follower of the psychoanalytic school, saw love as a manifestation of life instinct and hate as a manifestation of death instinct (Mitchell, 1986). However, in contrast to Freud, Klein argues that "both destructive impulses and the capacity for love are, to some extent, constitutional and varying individually in strength" (Klein, 1956, p. 212). Nevertheless, both of them turned their attention to the analysis of children. Thus, their developmental theories are of importance for the present discussion.

In psychoanalytic theory, external circumstances play an important role in the manifestation of these impulses as they can influence them (Klein, 1956). Thus, psychoanalytic theory is developed around two main poles: the relationship between the ego and the impulses and the relationship between these and the external world (represented by the relationship with mother). The latter seems to play a central role in Klein's perspective about the development of aggression in children.



To begin with, according to Anna Freud children transform their “naked aggression” by means of different defence mechanisms (e.g. projection, displacement, reaction formation or turning into the self) and through identification with the aggressor (Freud 1936a; 1936b). In projection the ego keeps in the authorities to whose criticisms it is exposed and incorporates them in the super ego. It is then able to project the prohibited impulses outward. In this way it learns what is regarded as blameworthy but protects itself by means of this defence mechanism from unpleasant self-criticism.

Within the developmental process of the young child Anna Freud saw “the naked aggression” to be transformed through displacement, reaction formations and turning in on the self. In “Notes on aggression” (1949) she postulated that these transformations are dependent on a loving relationship between mother and child (Freud, 1949). Anna Freud believed that children who are deprived of the company and care of their mothers for external, physical reasons and for internal, mental ones or where both factors are inextricably intermixed, react with aggression toward their mother (Freud, 1955). In relation to punishment Anna Freud states that “cruel treatment can produce either an aggressive, violent, or a timid, crushed, passive being” (Freud, 1976, p.152). However, in the same paper she clarifies that “the developmental outcome is determined not by the environment interference per se, but by its interaction with the inborn and acquired resources of the child” (Freud, 1976, p.152).

In addition, Anna Freud (1967) sees a tendency in young children within the course of displacement to lose their possessions. In this way, she asserted the

thesis that children direct to their possessions the whole hostility aroused by the frustrations imposed, “especially if the children who are frustrated are unable for internal or external reasons to react aggressively toward their parents” (Freud, 1967, p.102).

Moreover, through the identification with the aggressor the child becomes as angry or frightening as she/he fears the adult is/was with him. In this way, identification leads to the mastery of instincts. The child is *not* identifying him/herself with the person of the aggressor but with his aggression. Thus, the child transforms himself from the person threatened into the person who makes the threat. In addition, identification with the aggressor leads to the internalisation of other people’s criticisms of the child’s behaviour. However, “the internalised criticisms are not yet transformed into self-criticism but turned back to the outside world” (Freud, 1936b). As Anna Freud clarified this mechanism “is normal only so long as the ego employs it in its conflict with authority” (Freud, 1936b, p. 21). Finally, Anna Freud introduced the notion of “Autoaggression” as “a representative of pure destructive expression” (Freud, 1951, p.61). Aggressive behaviour in children follows the course of developmental lines (Freud, 1974) and can also be a reaction to pain (Freud, 1952).

Anna Freud’s ideas were also supported by a study conducted by Snyder and Rogers (1997) with juvenile offenders. In their findings they argued that violence is used to preserve a sense of existence and psychic equilibrium as well as to

express rage and destroy unwanted projected parts of the self and dangerous intrusions into a fragile self-coherence.

Melanie Klein (1946) refers to projective identification as a mechanism of defence that is developed in the relationship with mother. According to her writings “if mother comes to contain the bad parts of the self, she is not felt to be a separate individual but it is felt to be the bad self. Much of the hatred against parts of the self is now directed toward the mother. Projective identification, in this sense, establishes the prototype of an aggressive object relation” (Klein, 1946, p.183). The earliest exclusive relation with the mother plays a crucial role in the development of Envy. Envy according to Klein (1956) is “the angry feeling that another person possesses and enjoys something desirable- the envious impulse being to take it away or to spoil it. This implies the subject relation to one person only and goes back to the earliest exclusive relation with the mother” (Klein, 1956, p. 212).

Furthermore, according to Klein, the differentiation of aggression in boys and girls is based on the child-mother relationship. As she points out “aggression in boys [...] is rooted in his dread of his mother whom he intended to rob of the father’s penis, her children and her sexual organs. [...] Girls discover their lack of penis. They feel this lack to be a cause of hatred for the mother, but at the same time their sense of guilt makes them regard it as a punishment” (Klein, 1928, p.75).

In addition, a major technical innovation with educational significance was introduced by Klein in child analysis: the use of toys. Toys in her work represent not only the object of phantasy but object relations as well. Klein offers the toy as a symbol to the child, senses its anxiety and discovers its phantasies (Mitchell, 1986, p. 23). Unlike Freud the key concept of her theory is not the unconscious but phantasy (Mitchell, 1986, p.23).

Within this perspective, Klein reports that “aggressiveness is expressed in various ways in child play either directly or indirectly. It is essential to enable the child to bring out aggressiveness in order to understand why at this particular moment of transference situation destructive impulses come up and to observe their consequences in the child’s mind. Feelings of guilt refer not only to the actual damage done but to what the toy stands for in the child’s unconscious” (Klein, 1955, p.41). Her observations suggested to her that the child is afraid of retaliation. As she reports “child’s attitude toward a toy he has damaged is very revealing: Puts aside such a toy representing for instance a sibling or parent and ignores it for a time. This indicates dislike of the damaged object, due to the persecutory fear that the attacked person (represented by the toy) has become retaliatory and dangerous” (Klein, 1955, p. 42).

In play analysis as it was introduced by Melanie Klein it was shown that “symbolism enabled the child to transfer not only interests, but also phantasies, anxieties and guilt to objects other than people. A great deal of relief is experienced in play and this is one of the factors which make it so essential to the child ” (Klein, 1955, p. 52). However, Klein supports the idea that children admit that their aggressive acts were directed against the real objects but “only when

very powerful and longstanding resistances have been overcome” (Klein, 1926, p.67). Thus, the educational importance of Kleinian theory led it to become the basis for further application of the psychoanalytic theory in play analysis (Hollway, 1999; Parker, 1995).

With regard to the role of educational processes Freud (1949) suggests that “destructiveness in children is not open to direct educational influences e.g. severe control, punishments etc. An appropriate therapy has to be directed (Freud 1949, p.48). Freud (1970) comments on the relation of school failure and aggression by asserting that: school failures can be due “to sexual or aggressive symbolisation either of the learning process as such or of the particular subject to which the learning difficulty is attached” (Freud, 1970, p.124). This realisation “points to blocking and inhibitions interfering with basically intact intellectual functions” (Freud, 1970, p. 110). Thus, in Freud’s theory “antisocial reactions may be the mark of diffusion or insufficient fusion between libido and aggression or of insufficient control of drives in the impulsive character, or of a violent defensive reaction against underlying passive feminine learnings in boys striving overtly for masculinity” (Freud, 1970, p. 110).

Anna Freud’s ideas have influenced the later psychoanalytic approaches in regard to the ways of preventing violence in schools. Fonagy (2003) sees two kinds of violence expressed in the school settings: representational violence and violence in negative. Representational violence “is rooted in the need to create an emotional experience outside of the self that corresponds to an intolerable experience within and then to destroy that experience in order to ensure the

survival of the self” (Fonagy, 2003, p.232). In this way, “an object, which is felt to colonise the self, is projected into the other and destroyed therein” (Fonagy, 2003, p.234). In addition, violence in the negative is violence expressed without any particular provocation. This kind of violence is innate, constitutes a basic self-organising mechanism of the mind and aims at “the removal of perturbation that cannot be otherwise regulated” (Fonagy, 2003, p.233). In this kind of violence “the other is felt to threaten to create a disturbing representation, and has to be destroyed to protect the mind from states which are experienced as out of control” (Fonagy, 2003, p.234). The first kind of violence reflects the objectalising function, that is the “transformative of the psychical functions of objects producing functional objects that support life or love drives” (Fonagy, 2003, p.233). Whereas violence in the negative is the product of disobjectalisation, that is the detachment from the object “by taking away their singular, unique characteristics, such as appear in love” (Green, 1986, p.137, (as cited in Fonagy, 2003)). Both functions are associated with the capacity of mind to regulate object relations. Thus, while mentalisation creates a mental image of an object as alive, disobjectalising “performs the function of detachment which is necessary to prevent a sense of impingement by a representation that it is disturbing the ego” (Fonagy, 2003, p.234). Therefore, representational violence is regarded as the by-product of the failure of mentalisation, “a failure to fully appreciate the difference between psychological and physical reality” (Fonagy, 2003, p.232), whereas violence in negative is the product of the failure of disobjectalisation. If the mental capacity of a person to achieve disobjectalisation and thus make a person insignificant mentally is limited, then physical violence is employed in order to destroy the person physically. Within this perspective

Fonagy suggests that “understanding the child as an intentional being, offering the experience of a mind who has the child’s mind in mind is the ultimate source of protection against the mind’s vulnerability to being overwhelmed by the force of the concreteness of the experiences that it is capable of generating” (Fonagy, 2003, p.237). If children are deprived from this experience then they are most likely to present interpersonal violence. Fonagy’s aspects turn the focus of psychoanalytic thought in relation to violence at school to the functions of a child’s mental capacities.

Psychoanalytical theories on aggression have been subjected to strong criticism lately. Firstly, they fail to acknowledge the contribution of cognitive factors in the development of aggressive behaviour and the creative capacities of humans (Pedder, 1992). They also restrict the effect of human relations in the development of aggressive behaviour in mother–child relations. Thus, they ignore significant factors like group pressure which affect aggressiveness in children and are strongly related to children’s sociability in educational settings. In addition, despite its strong influence from ethological concepts, psychoanalytic theory has been developed in isolation from the other human sciences even from other psychological schools. This, according to Bornstein (2002) has affected its scientific kudos. Thus, psychoanalysis must become able “to generate data that are consistent with those of its neighbouring fields (e.g. experimental psychology, developmental psychology, neuroscience)” (Bornstein, 2002, p.586). Finally, as Bucci underlines “ the notions of innovation and adaptation for diverse populations were alien to the psychoanalytic world” (Bucci, 2002, p.217). Bucci supports Bornstein’s ideas by stating that

psychoanalysis “needs to incorporate current scientific knowledge and to be continuously re-evaluated and revised” (Bucci, 2002, p.219). In her ‘multiple code theory’ Bucci outlines the role of cultural diversity in the application of the psychoanalytic approach. Within this perspective, she stresses the need “to address what is universal and what is culturally determined in the reconstruction of the [emotion] schema in the treatment process” (Bucci, 2002, p.222) since “development, pathology and treatment, as psychological functions occur in different forms in different cultural contexts” (Bucci, 2002, p.223).

These criticisms led to the manifestation of a variety of suggestions based on the psychoanalytic principles regarding school-based intervention to the problem of bullying in schools that refer to direct educational influences since they have to do with cultural issues (Vernberg and Gamm, 2003), the regulation of human attachments on the basis of a holistic regulation of feelings, thoughts and actions (Guerra, 2003), the development of empathy (Shafii and Shafii, 2003) the enhancement of self awareness, school and classroom management and direct discipline techniques (Fonagy, 2003; Twemlow et al., 2003; Twemlow and Cohen, 2003). These will be discussed more thoroughly in the discussion part of this thesis.

### **3.2 The Behaviouristic approach**

In this section theories of the behaviouristic approach of aggression will be discussed: The Frustration-Aggression hypothesis and its initial modification by Berkowitz and Buss, and the social learning analysis of aggression introduced by Bandura.



### **3.2.1 Frustration – Aggression Hypothesis**

According to Dollard and his associates (1939) aggression is always a consequence of frustration. That is to say, the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and the existence of frustration always leads to aggression (Dollard et al., 1939). Frustration is regarded as “an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response at its proper time in the behaviour sequence” (Dollard et al. 1939, p.5). Aggression, in the Yale group psychologists’ sense, is a goal-directed behaviour as “an impediment to a goal is not a frustration unless the organism is striving, implicitly or explicitly, to reach this objective” (Berkowitz, 1989, p.60).

In addition they introduced the expectancy conception of frustration. They see frustration “as an obstacle blocking the attainment of an expected gratification” (Berkowitz, 1989, p.61). Within the conception of expectancy they point to certain parameters that affect the strength of instigation. These are the following: “the strength of instigation to the frustrated response, the degree of interference with the frustrated response and the number of frustrated response - sequence.” (Dollard et al. 1939, p.21).

Based on these assumptions the Yale group formulated a definition of aggression as “any sequence of behaviour the goal response to which is the injury of the person toward whom it is directed and not merely the delivery of noxious stimuli” (Dollard et al. 1939, p.7). How the aggressor hurts the target is not important for them, as the exact nature of the response varies. Different

aggressive forms are interchangeable in that the performance of any aggressive act presumably would lessen the thwarting-generated instigation to aggression.

Moreover, Dollard and his associates (1939) clarified that every thwarting obviously does not lead to overt aggression. This happens when: a) people realise that aggressive behaviour may bring punishment, b) people believe that their aggression will cause either themselves or loved ones to be harmed and c) if they think that they will be unable to carry out an aggressive act (Dollard et al., 1939).

Frustration -Aggression hypothesis was linked to a consideration of the target of aggression. As its supporters point out: “The strongest instigation aroused by a frustration is to acts of aggression directed against the agent perceived to be the source of the frustration” (Dollard et al., 1939, p. 28). However, the threat of punishment could lead to a displacement of aggression to substitute targets as well as to changes in the form of aggression (Dollard et al., 1939).

Later, in 1941 one of the group, N.E. Miller made an important clarification by stating that “Frustration produces instigations to a number of different types of response, **one** of which is an instigation to some form of aggression” (Miller, 1941, p. 338). Nevertheless, he also stressed that when aggression is not initially the dominant response, if the person persists in trying to reach the goal but the thwarting continues, the non aggressive reactions will extinguish and there will be an increasingly greater “probability that the instigation to aggression eventually will become dominant” (Miller, 1941, p. 339). In addition, Berkowitz (1989) proceeded to a revised formulation of the frustration-aggression

hypothesis by postulating, “frustrations produce an instigation to aggression only to the extent that they are unpleasant to those affected” (Berkowitz, 1989,p.68). Buss (1961) also asserted a critical perspective of the frustration-aggression hypothesis by stating that “frustration is only one antecedent of aggression and it is not the most potent one” (Buss, 1961, p.28).

The frustration-aggression hypothesis resembles the psychoanalytic theory in that both of them underline the instrumental use of aggression to achieve a non-aggressive goal such as food or dominance. However, the frustration- aggression hypothesis differed in proposing a link between aggression and particular kinds of experiences (Feshbach, 1997). In addition, neither of them considered the role of learning as a factor that would influence the development of aggression.

### **3.2.2 The aspect of Social learning analysis**

During the 1960’s behavioural psychologists began to turn their focus of attention to the use of learning theory, as B.F. Skinner and Thorndike introduced it. Thus, they saw behavioural disorders, and consequently aggression, as examples of operant behaviour (Emerson, 2000). One of the most influential theoreticians on modelling, Bandura (1973) regards aggression as “ an injurious and destructive behaviour that is socially defined as aggressive on the basis of a variety of factors, some of which reside in the evaluator rather than in the performer” (Bandura, 1973,p.8).

Aggression according to Bandura (1973) can be learned in two ways: by observation and by direct experience. In addition, in learning aggression by

experience Bandura asserted that “ during the course of trial-and error experimentation, unsuccessful responses tend to be discarded, whereas rewarded alternatives are progressively strengthened” (Bandura, 1973,p.90-91). Within this perspective, Bandura proposed three major sources of aggressive behaviour: the aggression modelled and reinforced by family members, the subculture in which a person resides and with which he has repeated contact and the symbolic modelling provided by the mass media (Bandura, 1973,p.93).

Moreover, based on the assumption that “ aggressive actions that are rewarded tend to be repeated, whereas those that are unrewarded or punished are generally discarded” (Bandura, 1973 p.183), Bandura distinguished three forms of reinforcement control of aggression. These are external reinforcement, vicarious reinforcement and self-reinforcement.

The educational significance of social learning behavioural analysis mainly concerns the role of the attribution of punishment in the development of aggression. Punishment, according to Buss, has a variety of effects on aggression. Firstly, “when there are competing responses, punishment may be expected to have a stronger and more lasting effect on aggression. Secondly, aggression is reinforced by intrinsic reinforcers. The attacking organism may acquire reward (extrinsic) or it may have a sudden drop in its anger level (intrinsic) as a consequence of the aggressive response. Thirdly, punishment will elicit aggression only if it is sufficiently intense. In addition, when aggression is followed by personal punishment, the aggressor usually becomes angry” (Buss, 1961, p.56). Finally, Bandura refers to punishment control of aggression through repeated punishment and humans’ cognitive capacities, which enable them to

regulate their behaviour. However, according to Bandura the elimination of aggressiveness through punishment may result in the selective inhibition and refinement of aggression, the modelling of aggressive tactics through punishment, the escalation of aggression through punishment and the disinhibition of aggression by reducing the risk of punishment. Some individuals may achieve through deindividuation, that is to say “the restraint reduction arising from loss of individuality by immersion in a group” (Bandura, 1973 p.229).

The assumption of social learning analysis regarding punishment was also connected in some studies with the intergenerational transmission of corporal punishment (Malamuth et al., 1991 (as cited in Muller, 1995); Muller et al. 1995; Simons et. al. 1991 (as cited in Muller, 1995)). These studies indicate that children who received severe corporal punishment are more likely to present aggressive behaviour. In this way they assume the operation of social learning principles in the development of aggression and support the view that aggressive actions and the use of corporal punishment are behaviours learned by one's parents. A more recent study with college students and their parents Muller and Diamond (1999) also supported the assumptions made of the social learning analysis in the intergenerational transmission of corporal punishment.

Nevertheless, Bjorkqvist asserts that the principle of vicarious conditioning, as the behaviourists mentioned it, “is not enough to explain the imitation of models and because of this social learning analysis should be extended to encompass other principles” (Bjorkqvist, 1997,p.70). Thus, he asserts the relationship of the

degree of identification between the imitator (learner) and model. In a study with Osterman it was found that parental influence could be explained in two ways: an emotional frustrating atmosphere and modelling. In addition, their results indicated that identification was an important factor in the modelling process (Bjorkqvist and Osterman, 1992). In this way, Bjorkqvist attempts to analyse how modelling occurs rather than why. Within this perspective he asserts the notion of cognitive modelling which is influenced by the basic assumption of Thorndike that observational learning takes place when associations are strengthened. Thus, according to Bjorkqvist (1997) “everything that strengthens associations is likely to affect imitation” (p. 73). This assumption was also supported by the findings of research Bjorkqvist (1997) conducted with a group of Finnish adolescents in order to investigate the extent to which adolescents of both sexes imitate their parents’ patterns of behaviour when they are angry.

The notion of identification, as it was manifested by Bjorkqvist, is central throughout the course of behaviour modelling as it determines the effects of the model (Feshbach, 1997) and may be considered as an attempt to reflect back to the notion of the ‘identification with the aggressor’ as it was mentioned in Freudian theory. However, within the behaviouristic way of thinking the term ‘identification’ refers to the identification of the imitator with the person that presents aggressive behaviour and not with aggression as an emotional state. In this way Bjorkqvist (1997) personalises the role of identification in the course of behaviour modelling.

In addition, Verlaan and Schwartzman (2002) argued that the social learning approach has not been concerned with the complex modelling processes of direct

and indirect parental influence (e.g. through dysfunctional parenting). Their study of 11-year-old children and their parents supported the thesis that parental behaviour is both directly and indirectly related to children's externalising behavioural problems. Within the limits of the present study indirect ways of parental influence will be examined in the section concerning the sociological factors of aggression.

Generally, behaviourists assert a stimulus-response perspective of aggression. They deal with a variety of issues that are strongly connected to education, such as learning and punishment. Within the educational setting these two variables can have a controversial effect regarding bullying. They can reinforce or restrict it. Behaviourists also refer to a number of notions that concern the sociological factors of aggressive behaviour, like the media and family relations. However, the behaviouristic approach to aggression focuses on the phenomenology of an aggressive act like bullying, as it deals with how people react to stimuli. Thus, it fails to examine a holistic "way of being" as an aggressor, since it overlooks internal factors that concern the aggressor's self-concept and apparently affect their role throughout the course of the act.

### **3.3 Personal construct theory**

Personal Construct Theory was introduced by George Kelly in 1955. Kelly perceives the individual as "a scientist" since his theory assumes that human behaviour is a continuous experiment with life in which a person's world view and resulting expectations form the choices made. Thus, there are different ways of construing events (constructive alternativism) (Ravenette, 1999). In

Constructive alternativism behaviour stems from an individual's construction of their world and is regarded in terms of interpersonal perceptions (Ravenette, 1999, p. 21). Personal Constructs are "the ways in which events are similar or different from others" (Landfield and Leitner, 1980, p.5) and "structures which facilitate the better understanding of future events" (Bannister and Mair, 1968, p.13). A person construes through a dual process of abstracting and contrasting. Therefore, in respect to bullying behaviour all the factors involved may give a different meaning to what they experience within the course of a bullying act, as each person constructs their own world in a different way.

Kelly (1955) commented on the significance of the role that a person embraces in an act. According to Kelly a role is "an ongoing pattern of behaviour that follows from a person's understanding of how the others who are associated with him in his task think" (Kelly, 1955, p.98). Thus, interactions between individuals depend on each person's understanding of the other. In this way, the aggressor embraces their role according to their anticipation of the people around them.

Aggressiveness and hostility are also regarded as concepts of transition in Personal Construct Theory. Individuals in conflict possess core structures that are difficult to be changed since these structures embody basic values. During an aggressive act the aggressor may experience fear or threat and may respond by hostility in order to preserve and protect their existing construction systems. Hostility is, therefore, "a desperate and anxious attempt to make one's conception of the world come out right" (Landfield and Leitner, 1980, p.13) or "an attempt by one person to force another person to conform to his own constructs and to confirm their expectations" (Ravenette, 1999, p.24). In this



way, the personal construct approach turns its attention to the individual that initiates the act and gives an existential perspective of aggression. However, unlike psychoanalytic theory, it assumes that the individual employs cognitive abilities in order to make sense of the world around them before the initiation of the aggressive act.

The use of personal construct theory in investigating children's behaviour and especially bullying in primary schools can raise a number of difficulties since Kelly's samples were drawn from articulate research students at the university whose cognitive developmental capacities enabled them to deal effectively with abstract verbalizations. Moreover, according to Ravenette Kelly "omitted children's actions and the actions of others in relation to children in his theory" (Ravenette, 1999, p. 43), despite the fact that he regards children as being actively involved as 'personal scientists' in the same way as adults (Kelly, 1969, p.222). However, Dalton suggests methods of using personal constructs with children which do not rely on their ability to articulate their aspects of construing verbally, such as drawing and role play (Dalton, 1996). In his work with children Ravenette also proposes methods that can enable the use of personal constructs with children (e.g. drawing, role play etc.).

If we assume that according to personal construct theory "a child out of his experience of life, has developed maps whereby he can plot his way through everyday events" (Ravenette, 1999, p.73), then the use of personal construct theory in the investigation of bullying behaviour would aim at exploring the bully's maps in order to find those "constructions whereby the bully makes sense

of himself and others” (Ravenette, 1999, p.62). An understanding of a bully’s personal constructions can lead to comprehension of their behaviour. The mutual exchange of theories between the bully and the teacher can also lead to the elicitation of strategies that are specific and relevant to the particular child (Clarke, 1999). Techniques that are effective with one child are not necessarily effective with another. As Pope and Keen assert for education “ to be a joint venture between the teacher and learner (in this case the bully) would be beneficial if each had some awareness of the other’s personal constructs” (Pope and Keen, 1981, p.28).

However, the use of personal constructs can be time consuming. They can also be used only as a basis for further discussion and not as a “psychological mirror” for the individual. In addition, if children disclose “heavy material” of information regarding their relationship with parents or other “significant people” in their life, the researcher might be obliged to arrange psychological support. Personal construct methodology can be used under certain conditions, to provide significant information about the bully’s reality, but not as the only method to eliminate bullying in schools. Thus, within the limits of this research, except from the Personal Construct activity, I am going to use a standardised test namely the Butler Self Image Profile For Children (SIP-C) (Butler, 2001) which is derived from Personal Construct Theory, in order to investigate the bullies’ self-image and self-esteem. Moreover, the employment of a role play technique will also enable the bullies’ understanding of how they map the factors that can be involved in an aggressive act.

## **Summary**

In this section Psychoanalytic theory, the Behaviouristic approach and the theory of Personal constructs were examined. In Psychoanalytic theory, aggression is a constantly flowing impulse rooted in human organism and not a reaction to external stimuli. Anna Freud turned her attention on the analysis of aggression in children focusing on defence mechanisms, identification with the aggressor and mother-child relation. Moreover, she introduced the notion of “Autoaggression”. Melanie Klein in continuing psychoanalysis with children focused on three objects : anxiety, symbolism and phantasy and their role in the development of children’s aggression. In addition, Klein introduced the use of toys as a technical procedure that enables an understanding of children’s aggression.

The Behaviouristic approach to the problem of human aggression was explored with reference to two perspectives: the frustration-aggression hypothesis which asserts the thesis that aggression is always a consequence of frustration and the aspect of Social learning analysis according to which aggression is learned by observation and experience. Finally, the Personal construct psychology regards aggression, as a concept of transition while a person is active in elaborating their personal construct system.

Generally, the investigation of those three psychological approaches to aggression and consequently, bullying behaviour raises a number of questions. If aggression is a destructive innate force in human nature, then how is it transformed by means of different defence mechanisms in the expression of bullying behaviour in children? To what extent does the mother-child

relationship affect the development of bullying behaviour? Does frustration contribute to the development of bullying behaviour in children? What is the role of punishment in the inhibition or reinforcement of bullying? How do bullies see themselves and to what extent does their perception of self affect their relationship with others? These questions will be examined throughout the course of this study.

#### **4. The Sociological factors of aggression**

Bullying takes place within a social context consisting of a variety of factors that influence the process of socialization and the expression of aggression in human relationships. In this study the following social factors will be considered: family, peers, gender, culture and the media. Finally, the role of social cognition in relation to the development of aggression in children will be examined.

##### **4.1 The role of family in the development of aggression**

This section will focus on the experiences a child can have at home and which can be derived from the three main relationships that sustain a family: the relationship between parents and children, the parental relationship and the relationship between the siblings.

###### **4.1.1 The relationship between parents and children**

The relationship between the parents and the child is defined by the way each one functions in their relationship. The quality of parenting plays a crucial role in the development of aggressive behaviour in children. Verlaan and Schwartzman (2002) assert that parenting influences children's externalised aggressive

behaviour in 'direct' and 'indirect' ways. According to Olweus (1993) the important factors that determine the quality of parental relationship are the emotional state of the parents including lack of warmth and involvement, negative attitude, permission of the children to be aggressive and the use of physical punishment (Olweus, 1993). These factors determine a negative parent-child relationship that affects the externalising behaviour of children.

Rubin et al. (2003) studied the relation between conflict-aggressive initiations at age 2 and externalising problems at age 4 for toddlers who incurred high levels of maternal negativity. Their results indicate the relationship between age 2 conflict-aggressive initiations and age 4 externalising problems was strongest for the toddlers who incurred high levels of maternal negativity. In addition, their study reveals that dispositional characteristics (e.g. temperament) predict parenting practices that reinforce or exacerbate problems associated with these characteristics. These findings imply that parental negative behaviour can also be a reaction to their children's temperament. Thus, parental reactions may lead children to employ an aggressive or a non-aggressive behaviour profile, depending on parenting style.

Negativity in parent-child relationships is strongly related to the attribution of physical punishment. As Kanoy et al. (2003) assert, a climate of negativity manifested through high levels of hostility on behalf of the parent predicts the use of more frequent physical punishment in children. Modelling in the initiation of punishment was discussed in the examination of the behaviouristic approach in the previous section. In this section I will focus on punishment as an element

of dysfunctional parenting by which parents influence their children's aggressive behaviour indirectly. According to a huge amount of research evidence punishment-oriented parents tend to have children who exhibit high levels of aggression, especially when they use physical punishment (Ateah et al., 2003; Berkowitz, 1993; Jouriles et al., 1997; Nobes and Smith 1997; Olweus, 1993; Weiss et al., 1992). Nobes and Smith (1997) assert the thesis that if one parent is physically punitive towards a child, the other is likely to be so and that associations between parents' administration of physical punishment may result from a common cause e.g. child behaviour, shared attitudes towards the child or even a common factor like marital violence. However, from the child's perspective it is the combination of maternal and paternal punitive actions that is important, since it contributes to the development of children's relational schemas and scripts. According to Gomez and Gomez (2000) children with negative perceptions of their relationships with their parents will have more negative relational schemas and scripts that will in turn lead to biased hostile social cognitions. These will in turn mediate the relationship between aggressive children's perceptions of their relationship with their parents and their aggressive behaviours (Gomez and Gomez, 2000 (as cited in Gomez et al., 2001). Their findings are consistent with the idea of Smith and Wilson (1998) that the intergenerational transmission of violence ("cycle of violence") is based on the intergenerational transmission of attachment. According to their findings harsh discipline leads the child to expect abuse and hostility in all relationships. Hence in school the child expects hostility and pre-empts this with aggression (Smith and Wilson, 1998).

Generally, bullies tend to have less cohesive relationships with their parents (Berdondini and Smith, 1996 (as cited in Smith, 1998); Bowers et al., 1992) and the factors mentioned above seem to play a role in the way they function in their reciprocal relationship with their parents. Moreover, negative parent-child relationships do not only influence their interaction at home but they negatively affect children's beliefs about their familiar and unfamiliar peers as well. Therefore, they lead to the development of aggressive behaviour towards their peers (Lewis et al., 1999).

Thus, in the investigation of aggression in children the way each parent is related to a child has to be seen within a context of life events that determine family life and the way each member relates to the other members of the family. Within this perspective there is a broad range of factors that determine the quality of parent-child relationships and which will be taken into consideration throughout the course of this study. These factors will be parents' childhood experiences with their own parents, social and economic variables, the duration of time that parents spend within the current family setting, the complexity of the family setting, the biological relatedness of the parent-child and the characteristics of the child (Dunn et al., 2000). Finally, Dunn et al. (2000) in their study with parents and their children suggest that there is a considerable covariance between partners' life course histories and their concurrent parenting. In this way, the investigation of marital relationships will also be important in the examination of bullying behaviour in children.

#### **4.1.2. The relationship between parents**

Parental conflict contributes to the establishment of aggressive domestic climate and heightens the chances of childhood aggressiveness (Berkowitz, 1993; Jouriles, 1996). Baldry (2003) in a cross-national study conducted with a sample of 1059 Italian elementary and middle school students suggests that exposure to interparental violence is strongly associated with bullying at school. In addition, Kanoy et al. (2003) have found that marital conflict is one of the main predictors of physical punishment which in turn affects the development of aggressiveness in children.

At the moment research evidence about domestic violence in Cyprus is not available since this issue is still a taboo. However, according to the reports of the Department of Social Services the number of incidents reported have significantly increased the last three years. In 2001 there were 436 incidents reported to the department, whereas in 2002 the incidents reported were 598. This notable increase could be due to the fact that in recent years women, who seemed to be the victims in most cases, are given enough professional support in order to be able to report their problem and ask for help. In Greece domestic violence appears to occur at a rate similar to that of other countries, with women as the most likely victims and men as the most common perpetrators. In addition, partner violence in Greece occurs within a context of social attitudes stressing the inequality of women (Antonopoulou, 1999).

There are a variety of factors reported in the relevant literature that influence parental behaviour and promote domestic violence such as individual pathology



(personality disorders, mental illness, alcoholism and drug abuse), factors in the social structure and economic dependency of women (Black and Newman, 1996). Moreover, family background (Shochet et al., 1997; Wherry et al., 1994 (as cited in Shochet et al., 1997); Wind et al., 1994 (as cited in Shochet, 1997)) plays a crucial role in promoting domestic violence. The bi-directionality in parent-child aggression leads to an intergenerational transmission of marital aggression. The abusive parents were abused themselves or witnessed marital abuse when they were growing up (Hazler, 1996; Schwartz et al., 1997 (as cited in Shochet and Dadds, 1997)). Shochet and Dadds (1997) in a study of three clinical cases of children who had suffered physical or sexual abuse report that systemic factors in a family may provide secondary trauma to these children either with underresponsiveness to the child's situation or an inability of the unresolved grief response (Shochet and Dadds, 1997). This happens because the family system problems can affect the type and extent of psychopathology (Nash et al., 1993; Wherry et al., 1994) as well as the prognosis for abused children (Wind and Silvern, 1994). Moreover, social class, drinking problems and stress (Berkowitz, 1993; Geen, 1990) can contribute to family violence. According to Berkowitz (1993) aggression is "a reaction to stress of one kind or another. Economic problems, work difficulties as well as changes in daily routines e.g. a death or illness of a loved person or a birth of a new baby, can be stressful events for a family" (Berkowitz, 1993,p.261).

As far as the forms of domestic violence is concerned, research indicates that when one form of violence is found in the family, other forms are more likely also to occur (Jouriles et al., 1996; Walker, 1999). The acknowledgement of the

different kinds of aggression in the family can be very important in understanding bullying behaviour since the frequency and variety of marital aggression is correlated with children's behavioural problems (Jouriles et al., 1996).

The effects of exposure to domestic violence can be traumatic to the child and can last for a lifetime (Black and Newman, 1996; Osofsky, 1995). Various studies have found raised incidence of childhood emotional, conduct and learning problems as well as psychosomatic disorders (Lewis, 1991; Peled et al., 1995 (as cited in Black and Newman, 1996)). Children who experience domestic violence express fear, anxiety, confusion, anger and disruptions in their lives (Jaffe et al., 1990, (as cited in Black and Newman, 1996)). They also have a higher incidence of post-traumatic stress (PTSD) (Drell et al., 1993, (as cited in Osofsky, 1995); Garnezy and Masten, 1994 (as cited in Black and Newman, 1996); Scheeringa et al., 1995, (as cited in Osofsky, 1995)) which is characterised in children by nightmares, sleep disorders, flashback traumatic play and avoidance of the traumatic situation. Children may take on a parenting role and become unable to leave their home because they have to protect their mother or siblings or find a way to prevent violence (Black and Newman, 1996). As they get older they may show anger and hostility toward their mother, use aggression for problem-solving, exhibit high degree of anxiety or become manipulators of the family system (Black and Newman, 1996). Females may present somatic complaints or show withdrawn, passive and clinging behaviour (Jaffe et al., 1990, (as cited in Black and Newman, 1996) ).

This evidence suggests that there is a need to examine the quality of parental relations in order to gain a better understanding of bullying behaviour at school.

#### **4.1.3 The relationship between siblings**

Finally, the relation between the siblings (Newman et al., 1997) as well as the order of the child in the family (Dunn and Munn, 1986) can affect parent-child relations and consequently the expression of aggression in the family. According to research evidence siblings can provide important support to each other when they have to face domestic violence (Dunn and McGuire, 1992, Jenkins and Smith, 1990; Jenkins et al. 1989). When one of the siblings is abused the non-abused sibling may feel fear, relief and triumph. Nevertheless, witnessing chronic violence puts the child at a high risk for post-traumatic stress disorder with dissociative symptoms, as he or she finds ways of accommodating to the repeated trauma (Newman et al., 1997). However, some researchers refer to physical violence occurring between siblings but they regard it as a common phenomenon (Graham-Bermann, 1994, (as cited in Newman et al., 1997)).

In addition, the spacing of children in the family plays a role in the development of aggression in the family as older siblings may provide models of behaviour to the younger ones. For example, Dunn and Munn (1986) reported that physical aggression by the children at 24 months was associated with the aggressive behaviour of the sibling at the time and 6 months earlier (Dunn and Munn, 1986). They also believe that the reason for sibling fighting is the attraction of parental attention. Thus, maternal involvement increases sibling conflict and deprives the children of the opportunity to learn to resolve their conflicts independently. However, maternal intervention can reduce the likelihood of physical aggression

but at the same time it is affected by birth order. Discussing rules and feelings with the first-born child contributes to the development of relatively more mature forms of behaviour on behalf of the eldest child. Thus, the lack of consistency in maternal behaviour to child and to sibling could reflect different expectations concerning the two children, given their age difference (Dunn and Munn, 1986).

Thus, an investigation of the bully's relationship with their siblings through interviewing their parents would enlighten the extent to which this relationship affects the development of aggressive behaviour at school.

#### **4.2 The role of peers in the development of aggression**

Children make important discoveries about the effects of aggression in human relationships in their interaction with peers. In this way the role of peers affects the development of aggression in children as peers can reward aggressive behaviour (Berkowitz, 1993). They also serve as models since aggressive children may become the strongest members of the class and, thus, may be identified as leaders (Boulton and Smith, 1994).

Children usually relate to friends who have similar lifestyle and share the same ideas about aggression. Children who believe that they can get their own way with aggression "can threaten the social order at schools" (Berkowitz, 1993,p.171). This idea was also supported by the findings of Poulin and Boivin (2000) who asserted the thesis that friends are more similar in proactive aggression than in reactive aggression, since in their research project proactive aggressive boys tended to select proactively aggressive peers and friends. In

addition, Coie et al. (1999) in their observations of aggressive interactions in boys' laboratory play groups argued that mutually aggressive dyads displayed twice as much total aggression as randomly selected dyads. Moreover, aggressive behaviour is strongly related to the social status of the bully in their peer group. According to Boulton and Smith (1994) bullies tend to be liked and disliked by above-average number of classmates, so it may not matter to them that they are probably disliked by their victims, since they have their own friends. In addition, they feel safe to start fights since their identification as "leaders" makes their peers less inclined to provoke them for fear of reprisals. In a later study he asserted that what children do on the playground during recess is related systematically to certain aspects of their current and subsequent peer relationships (Boulton, 1999).

Nevertheless, a number of studies have revealed that the development of aggressive behaviour in children is also related to peer rejection. Perry et al. (1990) support the idea that many rejected children are highly aggressive. This agrees with findings by Dodge et al. (1990) that high rates of instrumental aggression are related to social rejection by peers. In addition, according to Vitario et al. (1992) the combination of peer rejection and aggression is more stable than rejection on its own in the early elementary school years. Furthermore, Sandstrom and Coie (1999) argued that aggressive rejected children had an easier time improving their peer acceptance than less aggressive rejected children in early adolescence since at that particular age they receive some degree of within-clique support for their actions from their peers who perceive aggression as a more glamorous, powerful or "cool" image. However, Zakrski

and Coie (1996) believed that aggressive rejected children are particularly prone to inaccurately perceive their social competence.

Despite the growing interest in the investigation of peer group dynamics in relation to aggression in children, however, very little is known about the role of self-perceived status of the bullies in their peer group over time. Thus, the application of a sociometric technique as well as an interview with the bullies' teachers would enable the investigation of the bullies' perception of their social competence at school.

### **4.3 The role of gender in the development of aggression**

Gender is a relevant factor in the expression of childhood aggression in the family and in school from the sociological perspective. A variety of studies report that boys are more likely than girls to bully (Baldry, 1998; Borg, 1999; Boulton, 1993; Charlton et al., 1998; Fabre-Cornali et. al., 1999; Olweus, 1978, 1993; Ortega and Mora-Merchan, 1999; Pateraki and Houndoumadi, 2001). In addition, other studies have examined a range of gender differences in bullying behaviour, e.g. stability, type of response etc.

In the research conducted by Boulton and Smith (1994) the pattern of bully nominations received by boys and girls tended to be stable across one school year and extended to the next. This effect was more marked in boys than in girls owing to the differences in the social organisation of boys' and girls' peer groups (Boulton and Smith 1994). As a consequence, there were gender differences both in the types of solutions favoured by boys and girls, and in the effects of "watching" either boys and girls perpetrating bullying or being bullied (Elliot

and Faupel, 1997). Girls produced a larger range of responses than boys and favoured solutions that change the situation of the bullying either through a whole school response or a response focused on the immediate class or group involved in the bullying. Boys favoured punishment for the bullies or victim action (Elliot and Faupel, 1997).

It seems that gender difference in the attribution of an aggressive act concerns primarily the type of aggression that is attributed to the victim. In some studies boys are reported to be more physically aggressive than girls (Black and Newman, 1996; Henington et al., 1998; Lahey et al., 2000; Xie et al. 2003). Different explanations were given to support this conclusion. Xie et al. (2003) report that physically aggressive boys had higher levels of social network centrality in their socialization at school. Thus, physical aggression may facilitate the establishment and maintenance of their dominance or popularity (For a review see Xie et al., 2003). In addition, Henington et al. (1998) in his study with 461 boys and 443 girls in second and third grades revealed that girls who received extreme scores on overt aggression in the sociometric technique were likely to be rejected, whereas boys who obtained extreme scores on overt aggression were unlikely to be rejected. The children's perceptions about bullies may be influenced by their teachers' perceptions about them (Henington, 1998) or their parents' (Olweus, 1993). Crick et al. (1996) in a study with 459 9 to 12-year-olds assert that boys viewed physical aggression as one of the most normative behaviours that boys direct towards their peers, whereas girls saw relational aggression as one of the most normative aggressive behaviour in their peer group. Their findings were also supported by a later study in which children

who engaged in gender non-normative forms of aggression (i.e. overtly aggressive girls or relationally aggressive boys) were significantly more maladjusted than children who engaged in gender normative forms of aggression (Crick, 1997).

Gender role expectations and the fact that forms of aggression most common to boys (e.g. physical fighting) are more visible have led most studies to focus on boys' aggression. However, girls can be aggressive but in other ways that do not seem to be recognised by the significant others in their environment, namely their parents, teachers and peers. Thus, the role of gender has to be seriously taken into consideration during the course of the present study as it often determines bullying behaviour at school and may lead to certain bias regarding the way teachers or parents face children's aggression.

#### **4.4 The role of culture in the development of aggression**

Inter-cultural norms also give another perspective on the way aggressive behaviour is developed or inhibited including gender differences. For example, some communities enable high levels of male aggression (Antonopoulou, 1999, Berkowitz, 1993).

Poverty and war are significant factors that can promote aggressive behaviour. There is a considerable amount of research that postulates that poverty impedes effective parenting and in this way it promotes aggressive behaviour in children (For a review see Pagani, 1999). In addition, Tolan and Henry (1996) in a study among urban poor children found that aggression can be related with other



problems including internalised types (e.g. anxiety, depression, attention problems). However, Guerra et al. (1995) in their investigation with 1935 elementary school White, African American and Hispanic children found that the relation between individual poverty and aggression was only significant for the White children, with significant interactions between individual and community poverty for the other 2 ethnic groups.

Moreover, war, according to research evidence, may create direct traumatic experiences. Indirectly, it may cause emotional damage and affect the parents' capacity to take care of their children (For a review see Paardakooer et al., 1999). Paardakooer et al. (1999) in a study with Sudanese refugee children found that these children had experienced significantly more traumatic events and suffered more daily hassles than the Ugandese comparison group. They were less satisfied with the social support they received and they used more coping modes. Compared to Ugandese children, the Sudanese reported more Post Traumatic Stress Disorders like complaints, behavioural problems and depressive symptoms. Their parents' impression of their behaving quite aggressively was also affirmed: they reported being easily irritated and angry more than the Ugandan children. This opinion was confirmed by the fact that on the subscale of the dimension of "aggression" Sudanese children had a significantly higher score. Most importantly Paardakooer et al. (1999) assumed that Sudanese parents who were also traumatised by war, were less capable of giving support since children complained of lack of emotional support, socializing and maternal support. The findings of Paardakooer et al. (1999) agree with those of Smith et

al. (2001) who revealed high levels of post traumatic stress symptoms in their investigation with 339 children in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Children who will participate in this study have not experienced war in Cyprus. However, their parents have experienced war and its consequences during their childhood and this fact may affect their parenting. As children some of the parents witnessed or were aware of violence and catastrophic events experienced by their siblings or family members. As they were very young they may be unable or reluctant to voice their distress. They may also experience feelings of guilt and anger because of their inability to prevent the disaster (Newman et al., 1997). If this is the case, secondary losses like loss of security, a loss of attention and a loss of confidence may occur in the way they relate to their children (Hindmarch, 1995, (as cited in Newman, 1997)). The loss of security may prompt the parents to be overprotective toward their children projecting to them their hidden fears and anxiety. Thus, the developmental history of the parents of the bully can contribute to an explanation of the reasons that promote aggression in their homes.

In addition, some of the children may also still live in the refugee campuses or near the division line. This fact may play a role in the formation of their personality and in the promotion of aggressive behaviour. A visit to their home with the parents' permission and an interview with their parents can enable the construction of a clear idea about the main elements that sustain the bully's cultural background.

#### **4.5 The role of Media in the development of aggression**

There are a number of studies that support the idea that media violence promotes aggressive behaviour in children and adolescents (Barbosa, 1996; Berkowitz 1993; Cantor, 2000; Geen, 1990; Olweus, 1993). Violent scenes presented in television or video games influence children through imitation, disinhibition, arousal and desensitisation (Charlton et al., 1998; Cantor, 2000; Newson, 1994). In this way, televised violence affects children's emotional, behavioural and social development. According to Charlton et al. (1998) if children repeatedly watch violence on television it will lose its ability to arouse them emotionally (Charlton et al., 1998). This effect will lead to "desensitisation" (Charlton et al., 1998) or "emotional blunting" (Berkowitz, 1993) and can be easily achieved since video violence is offered to viewers in the context of entertainment (Newson, 1994). Thus, children as viewers receive the message that this is all good for fun. They also receive distorted images of emotions that they have not yet experienced so must accept e.g. violence. In addition, brutality in television is likely to escalate over time, as industry must try to be more and more "entertaining" since in televised violent scenes the victims are often portrayed as being somewhat subhuman or as deserving the violent treatment (Newson, 1994). In addition, Huessman et al. (2003) in their study on the relation of TV-violence viewing and aggression from childhood to adulthood reveal that childhood exposure to media violence predicts young adult aggressive behaviour for both males and females. Identification with aggressive TV characters and perceived realism of TV violence also predict later aggression.

Moreover, video games also include an element of aggression and have a detrimental effect on the players (Griffiths, 1997). However, the literature on video games and aggression seems contradictory. There are a variety of studies that suggest that children do become more aggressive after either playing or watching a violent video game (For a review see Griffiths, 1997) but this evidence was only based on observation of the child's free play. Furthermore, there is some research evidence showing that playing aggressive video games does not make people more aggressive (Gibb et al., 1983; Scott, 1995 (as cited in Griffiths, 1997)). Griffiths (1997) in a critical view of these studies questions the procedures to measure aggression levels. He also points at the developmental effects and particularly at the relation between aggression and age of children, since those studies included children of different ages. He also sees video games in a social context of playing e.g. playing in groups or individually, which asserts the relation of peer group culture and playing video games.

It seems that video games, can have positive and negative aspects according to the way they are designed and put into a context. Video games that are designed carefully and put into the right context have the potential to be used as training aids in classrooms and therapeutic settings (Gardner, 1991 (as cited in Griffiths, 1997)). Nevertheless, Griffiths (1997) stresses the need for a general taxonomy of video games, as some of them are not so positive.

Moreover, with respect to the influence of television in the development of aggression, Charlton et al. (1998) in a naturalistic study in St. Elena island concluded that the continuance of good behaviour even after the introduction of television to the people of the island was due to the fact that children's behaviour

on that island was shaped largely by environmental (situational) influences or cues, which were both uniform and beneficial. These findings suggest that if television does affect viewers disagreeably, then what we have to do is to help children to make good use of television by exercising social controls like watchfulness and care over them (Charlton et al., 1998).

Do children always discuss what they see on television with their parents? How often do parents watch television with their children? What if a parent who shows disapproval for televised violence often presents violent behaviour at home? These are some of the questions that have been taken into consideration in relevant research projects.

#### **4.6 The role of Social Cognition in the development of aggression**

Social Cognitive Development theory suggests that aggression results from biases that occur during the process of social information processing which includes the following sequential steps: encoding of social cues, interpretation of social cues, clarification of goals, response access or construction, response decision and behavioural enactment (Crick and Dodge, 1994; Quiggle et al., 1992; Waldman, 1996). In addition, Crick and Dodge (1996) assert the thesis that aggressive children process social information in distinctive ways. Children may interpret a peer's behaviour as intentionally harmful to the self. For them aggression may serve as a retaliation of defence against the peer (reactive aggression). Furthermore, aggressive children may expect relatively positive outcomes to accrue for aggressing and feel more confident about their ability to

perform aggressive acts than do their non-aggressive peers. For them aggression is an effective means for obtaining social goals (proactive aggression).

Following this perspective a variety of studies were initiated on the ability of aggressive children to attribute mental states to themselves and others in order to explain and predict behaviour (theory of mind) (Gomez et al., 2001; Lemerise and Arsenio, 2000; Quiggle et al., 1992; Sutton and Keogh, 2000, Sutton et al. 1999; Sutton, 2001; Waldman, 1996; Weiss et al., 1992).

Sutton et al. (1999) revealed that bullying was positively correlated with understanding of emotion. In addition, the realisation by bullies that they may act on false beliefs may become a particularly useful skill in the attribution of indirect kinds of bullying e.g. spreading gossip, social isolation etc. (Sutton, 1999 (as cited in Sutton, 2001)). Similarly, Sutton and Keogh (2000) found that theory of mind performance was associated with ‘avoidance of responsibility’ factor. This refers to a bully persuasively arguing that they do not feel guilty because “they did not do it” and this persuasion might be facilitated by a good understanding of the mental stages and emotions of others. Moreover, Sutton and Keogh (2000, 2001) argue that bullies believe that others are not to be trusted or are there to be manipulated for their own gain (Sutton and Keogh, 2000, 2001 (as cited in Sutton, 2001)). Thus, Sutton’s work on social cognition does not support the view of bullies as socially deficient persons or as ‘oafish’ and stupid. It rather agrees with Bjorkqvist et al. (2000) who have found that social intelligence is positively and most strongly related to indirect aggression (Bjorkqvist et al., 2000 (as cited in Sutton, 2001)).

The Social Cognition approach focuses on the role of cognition and intelligence in the development of bullying behaviour in children. However, Lemerise and Arsenio (2000) regard the inclusion of emotion processes in models of personal-social decision making as an important factor that will expand the individuals' explanatory power.

Within the limits of this study the bullies' cognitive abilities as well as their adequacy in understanding emotion will be examined by means of an IQ test and a role-play activity, respectively.

### **Summary**

A variety of factors that influence the process of socialization and often determine the expression of aggression and consequently bullying behaviour were examined in this section. These were family, peers, gender, culture, the media and social cognition.

The quality of parenting, parental and sibling relationships are the main bases on which a family system is developed and thus play a crucial role in the development of aggression in children. In addition, peer relationships affect the development of bullying behaviour as children make important discoveries about the effects of aggression in human relationships in their interaction with their peers. Gender is also a relevant factor in the expression of childhood aggression since there are gender differences in the stability and form of bullying. Moreover, the broader cultural background, and especially hazardous situations like poverty and war can promote aggressive behaviour in children. Furthermore, there is

contradictory research evidence on the effects of media and video games in the development of childhood aggression. Finally, social cognitive development theory regards aggression as resulting from biases that occur during the process of social information processing.

The extent to which the factors mentioned above affect bullying behaviour in Greek Cypriot state primary schools will be examined in the present study by means of parents' and teachers' interviews, sociometric techniques, role play, participant observation and documentary analysis.

## **5. Research Questions:**

On the basis of this literature review the following research questions were formulated: a) is bullying a form of aggression? b) What is the situation regarding bullying in state Greek Cypriot Primary schools in Cyprus? and c) what is the bully's social and psychological reality and how do the different factors related to their reality contribute to the development of a bullying act?

In addition, the literature review and the manifestation of the research questions mentioned above led to the construction of the Proposed Model of Aggression (Figure 1, p.80).

### **5.1 The Proposed Model of Aggression**

The model (Figure 1, p.80) was built up on the basis of the theoretical review and in order to enable the empirical investigation of the research questions of this study. Thus, its targets are to find out whether bullying could be considered as a form of aggression, to examine the situation in state Greek Cypriot Primary



schools in Cyprus and to enable a systematic investigation of the bully's personality and social normality in Cyprus through its empirical aspect. Thus, it includes all the different independent variables which give a multidimensional character to aggressive behaviour and which have become the focus of inquiry of many different human sciences. The legitimization of the model derives from the need to create a technical division of the various factors that contribute to the development of an aggressive act and that were manifested throughout a systematic review of the various scientific theories on aggression in order to formulate an investigated idea of the phenomenon under study.

## **5.2 The variables of aggressive behaviour**

A brief clarification of the following terms would provide a basis for understanding how the different variables of aggressive behaviour function together throughout the procedure of an aggressive act.

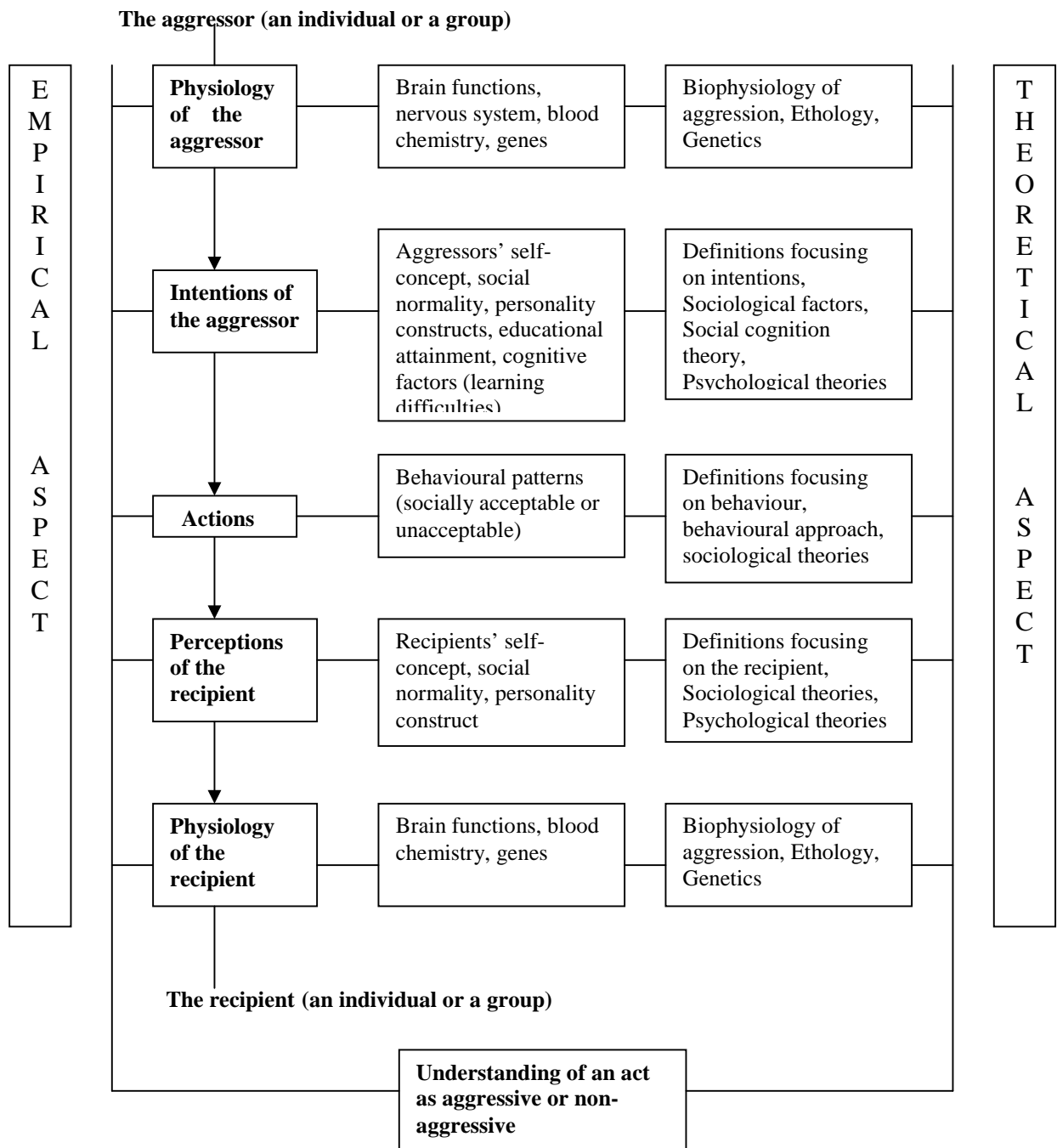
Aggressor: The person or the group that initiates an aggressive act

Recipient: The person or the group towards whom the aggressive act is directed.

Physiology of the aggressor: Research has shown biological functions of the body, genetic factors and medication are involved in aggressive behaviour (Clarke et al., 1999; Lubin et al., 2003; Moyer, 1976; Sinclair et al., 2003; Tremblay et al., 1998). Since these factors are related to brain functions they can affect not only the persons' physiology but their personality as well. They often influence the person's thoughts, choices and intentions. The contribution of physiological factors to aggressive behaviour has been the focus of inquiry for biologists and ethologists.

*Intentions of the aggressor:* The aggressor's internal motives and intentions that lead to a particular choice of aggressive behaviour (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998; Parke and Slaby, 1983). These are mainly determined by the aggressor's self-concept and social normality and have been examined by psychological and sociological theories.

**Figure 1: The Proposed Model of Aggression**



Actions: The transfer of intentions into praxis. These are behavioural patterns of aggression that become parts of the aggressor's and the receptor's external reality. According to social normality aggressive actions can be acceptable or unacceptable. The actions of the aggressor have been the focus of the behaviouristic approach to aggression.

Perceptions of the recipient: The perceptions of the recipient are influenced by the recipient's self-concept and social norms (the degree to which a behaviour is frequent or generally acceptable).

Definition of an act as aggressive or non- aggressive: The complete definition of an act as aggressive or non- aggressive derives from the empirical as well as the theoretical aspect of the phenomenon and it refers to a holistic involvement of human existence in the procedure of an aggressive act.

### **5.3 An empirical exploration of the model**

The whole procedure described in the model was based on the assumption that an aggressor (an individual or a group) initiates an aggressive act towards a recipient (an individual or a group). The physiology of the aggressor is considered as the first variable of an aggressive act. Biological and genetic factors related to aggression are common to all human beings. The fact that every person carries them in their body means that every person has the potential to become an aggressor. However, their variable in strength and influence lead to different impacts. When a person is stimulated these elements affect the brain functions and consequently, over time, the individual's personality. Thus, the individual's aggressive intentions may have a biological background.

The aggressor's intentions are related to the aggressor's self-concept and social norms. The fact that intentions are internal variables (i.e. not immediately open to objective inspection) makes their exploration difficult.

Intentions, mainly consisting of thoughts and feelings, turn into praxis in the form of actions. Actions become parts of the aggressor's and the recipient's external reality. Thus, they make the aggressor's intentions more observable. The interpretation of aggressive acts is also related to social norms, as they are socially acceptable or unacceptable.

When aggressive actions are perceived by the recipient they are interpreted by them according to their own self-concept and sense of social normality. The recipient's interpretation of the inputs they get from actions directed to them takes the form of perceptions and influences the definition of an act as aggressive or non aggressive. The recipient then may react to the aggressive act directed towards him in a number of ways: e.g. with aggression or suppression, with flight or redefinition.

In the first case, the aggressor becomes the stimulus for the recipient and the procedure can be repeated. In the repetition of the procedure the two main participants may change roles. Recipients in order to defend themselves may react as aggressors. In the second case, the recipient may suppress their anger because of their psychological characteristics and sense of social normality, or they may react later. This possibility makes the time dimension an important parameter in the investigation of aggression.

In conclusion, the basic aim of this study is to test out the model by exploring some of the variables specified in the Proposed model of Aggression by an empirical study of bullying behaviour in Greek Cypriot State Primary schools. Since the focus of this study is on the bully the model will be used to examine the factors that affect the bully's actions.

In this chapter a review of the relevant literature on aggression was attempted so that a holistic idea of the phenomenon under study could be given. This included a review of four major theoretical approaches. The literature review and the manifestation of the research questions led to the construction of The Proposed Model of Aggression (Figure 1, p.80). The complexity of aggression and its multidimensional character revealed in the literature review led to the necessity for employing a variety of methodological approaches in order to examine all the different factors that can be involved, and consequently affect, the development of a bullying act. The multiple methodologies that were used according to the research questions within the present study will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter will include an explanation of the Model of the Empirical Work (Figure 2, p. 86-87), a description of the sample and an account of the different instruments that were used.

### **1. The Model of Empirical Work**

The multidimensional character of aggression and the complexity of the problem of bullying in schools led to the development of the model of empirical work in order to systematise the research part of this project. According to this model the research part was undertaken in two main phases.

Phase 1 was accomplished during the academic years 2000-2002, after the first literature review on aggression and bullying, and comprised five steps (see Figure 2, p.86). Its general aim was the selection of the nine case studies. Stage 1.1 was the identification of the sample by means of a teachers' questionnaire in January 2001. The aim of this first investigation was to reveal the scale of the problem in primary schools in Nicosia and to find the three schools with the highest level of bullying in the town of Nicosia according to the teachers' replies. These schools will be referred to as Primary 1, Primary 2 and Primary 3 in this study. The selection of the three schools was followed by the administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) to the pupils of the sixth grade of the three schools (Stage 1.2), in order to find out possible agreement between the pupils' and teachers' perceptions about the level of bullying in the three schools. This stage was initiated in November 2001. Step 1.3 was the

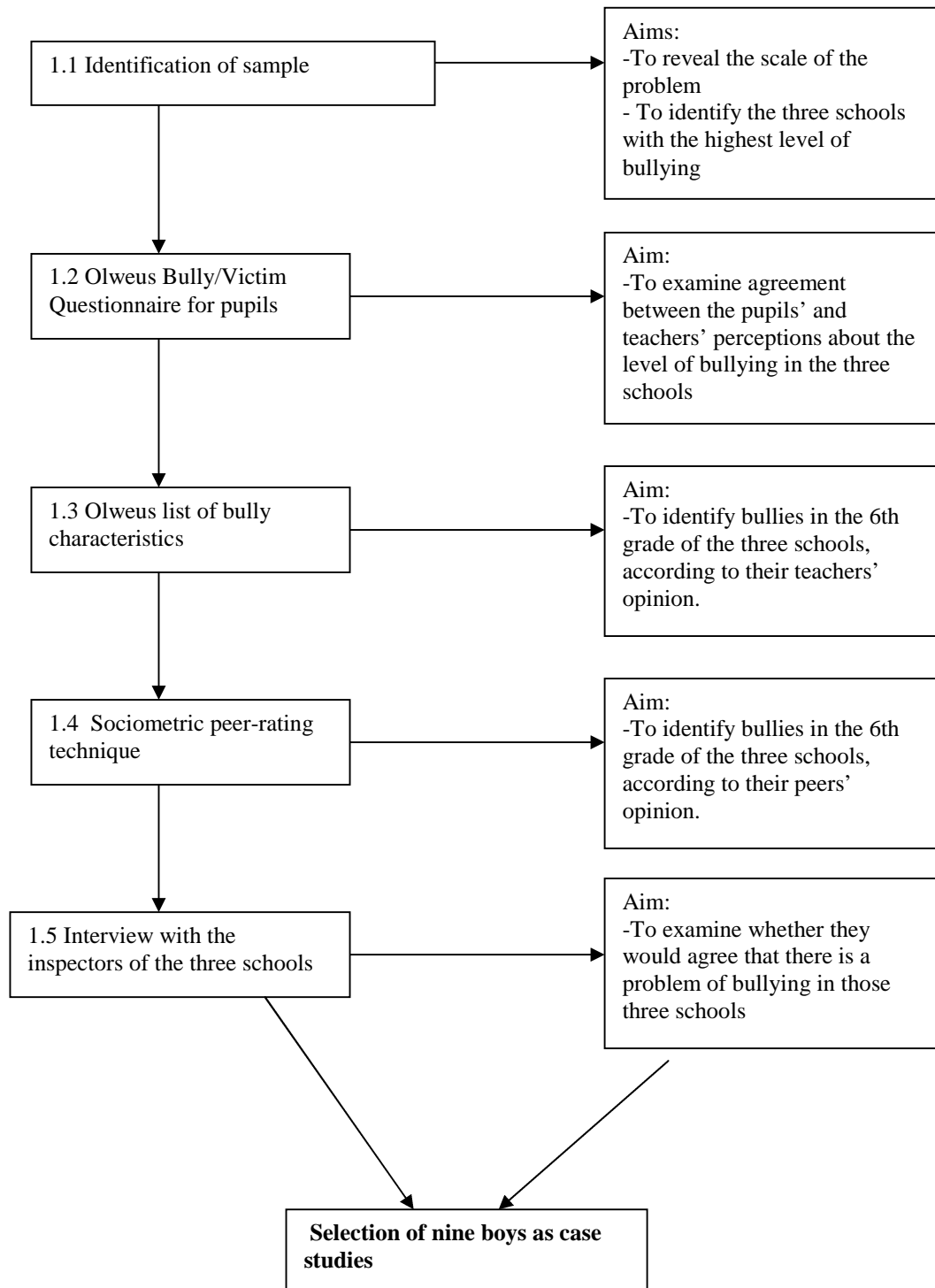
identification of the pupils who presented bullying behaviour, in each class of grade 6 in the three schools. These pupils will be referred to as 'bullies' within the course of this study. Identification was done by means of the Olweus list of general characteristics of bullying and by means of bullies being identified by the teachers in each class. These children presented high levels of bullying behaviour. The identification of the bullies by the teachers was followed by the sociometric peer-rating technique carried out by all the pupils of the sixth grade in the three schools (Stage 1.4). The peer-rating technique aimed at finding out the bullies in the 6 grades of the three schools, according to their peers' opinions. Steps 1.3 and 1.4 were conducted from January until April 2002. Finally, Phase 1 ended with interviews with the inspectors of the three schools in May 2002, so as to figure out whether they would agree that there is a problem of bullying in those three schools and its scale (Stage 1.5).

In this way, Phase 1 comprised a triangulation of the teachers', the pupils' and the inspectors' perceptions about bullying in the three schools leading to a selection of the nine boys that presented bullying behaviour according to their teachers' and peers' opinion.

Phase 2 was accomplished after the selection of case studies and consisted of twelve steps (see Figure 2, p.87). The general aim of this Phase was the investigation of the nine case studies. Stage 2.1 comprised the interviews with the bullies' parents in order to investigate their family and community background.

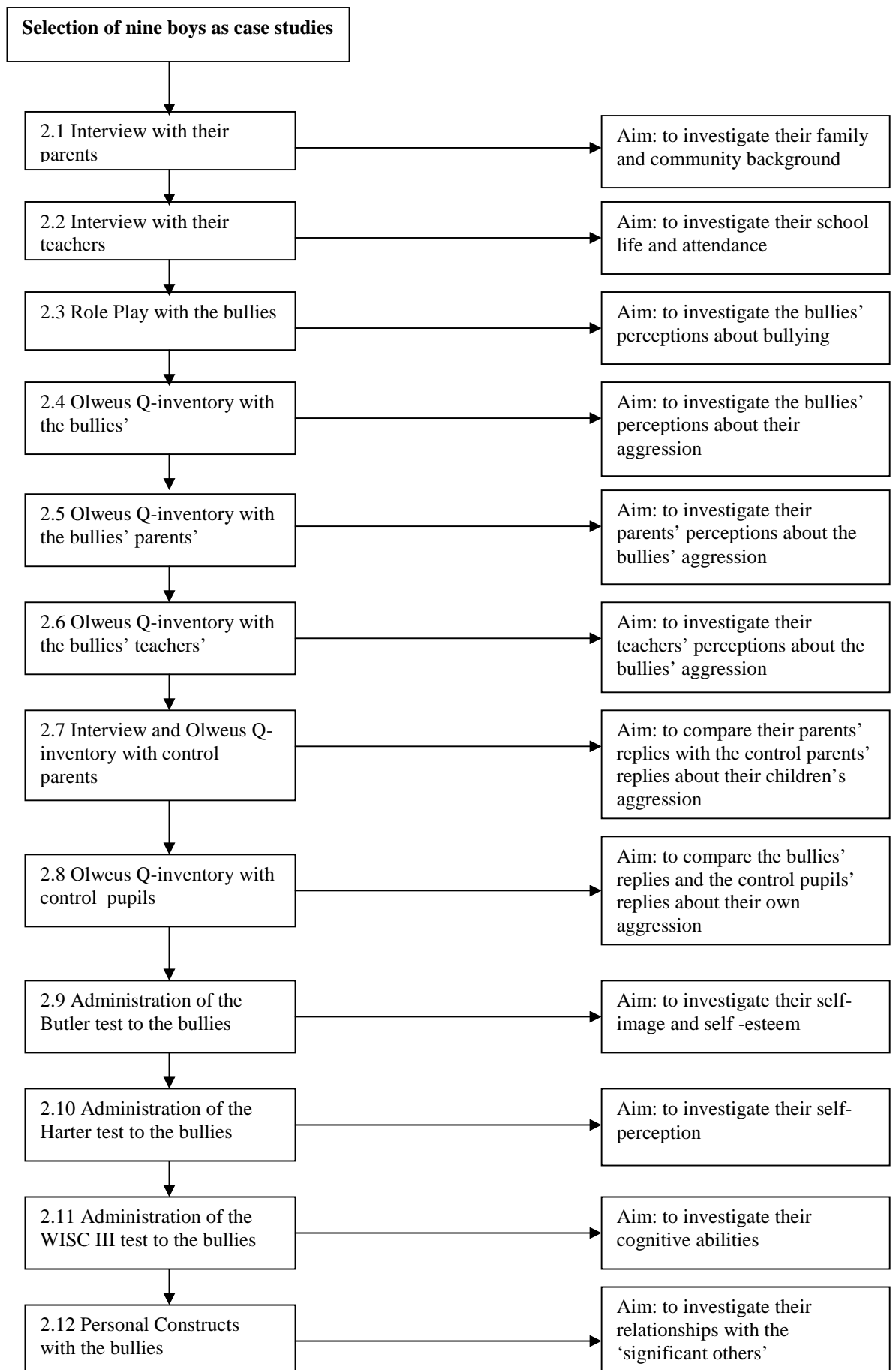
**Figure 2: The Model of Empirical Work**

**Phase 1: The selection of case studies**





## **Phase 2: The investigation of case studies**



Their parents' interviews were followed by their teachers' interviews which aimed at investigating their school life and attendance (Stage 2.2). Stage 2.3 was a Role-play activity with the bullies so as they could express their perceptions about bullying. Step 2.4 was the administration of the Olweus Q-sort inventory to the bullies in order to investigate their perception about their aggression. The same inventory was provided to their parents and teachers in order to examine their perceptions about the bullies' aggression (Stages 2.5 and 2.6) as well as to control parents and control pupils in order to compare their replies with the parents' and the bullies' replies on the aggression variable (Stages 2.7 and 2.8). Stages 2.9 and 2.10 were accomplished by the administration of the Butler Self Image Profile test for children (SIP-C) (Butler, 2001) and the Harter Self Perception Profile for Children test (SPPC) (Harter, 1985) to the bullies in order to investigate their self-image, self-esteem and self-perception. This was followed by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for children (WISC III) (Wechsler, 1992) which aimed at investigating the bullies' cognitive abilities (Stage 2.11). Finally, the perceptions of bullies about their relationships with their 'significant others' were investigated by means of exploration of their Personal Constructs (Step 2.12).

During Phase 2, documentary analysis and participant observation were also employed in order to obtain a holistic idea of the bullies' social environment and life history. The outcomes from the participant observation and the documentary analysis were kept in a research journal to which frequent references will be made throughout the text of this thesis.

## **2. The Samples**

The samples consisted of different groups for each phase and each Stage. Phase 1 aimed at the identification of the sample through a triangulation and thus teachers, pupils and inspectors participated as a sample.

**a) Teachers of 29 primary schools:** The sample was 196 teachers from 29 schools in the town of Nicosia. One hundred fifty eight of them were classroom teachers (80.6%), 20 were deputy heads in their schools (10.2%) and 16 of them were head teachers (8.2%). Two teachers did not report their status. Twenty six of the teachers (13.3%) were males and 169 (86.2%) were females. One teacher did not report their gender. Most of the teachers (69.1%) had 1-15 years of service in public schools and 14.8 % had postgraduate studies in foreign universities.

**b) Pupils of 6<sup>th</sup> grades of Primary 1, Primary 2 and Primary 3:** 161 pupils participated in Phase 1 from the 3 schools that presented the highest level of bullying in Nicosia according to the teachers' replies to the first questionnaire: 79 were boys and 82 girls; 16.1% of the pupil from Primary 1, 37.3% from Primary 2 and 46.5% from Primary 3.

**c) Teachers of 6<sup>th</sup> grades of Primary 1, Primary 2 and Primary 3:** 35 teachers participated overall on this stage. Twenty one teachers from Primary 1 and Primary 2 completed the list with the Olweus criteria for bullying. Fourteen teachers in Primary 3 reported orally the names of the bullies in their classroom after they refused to give them in written form raising issues of confidentiality.

The invitation to participate in this study was directed to all the teachers who were teaching in the sixth grade of the three primary schools, since in each class there was a boy taken as a case study. In the primary school which was situated in a refugee campus there was only one class of grade 6 so three pupils were taken as cases studies from that single class in order to balance the number of cases taken in the other schools. Thus, one of the teachers had in her class three of the nine children that were taken as case studies. All the teachers were very willing to participate. Seven teachers participated in this study and all the interviews took place in their schools. Two of them were men and five were women. Two of them were also head deputies in their school. The average of their age was 41 years and the average of their years of service was 18.8 years. All of them had worked for some years in rural areas.

**d) Inspectors:** Three inspectors from the Department of Primary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture participated in the first phase of this study. The inspectors of Primary 1 and Primary 2 each reported that they had been inspecting these schools for 3 years. The inspector of Primary 3 had just been appointed as an inspector so he had been inspecting the third school for less than a year.

After the identification of the sample, in this case the nine boys, during Phase 1, Phase 2 aimed at the investigation of the nine case studies. Thus, the sample in the second phase of this project was constructed as following:

**a) The nine bullies:** The nine boys who presented bullying behaviour according to their peers and their teachers were the main sample in Phase 2. In this thesis

they will be named as ‘bullies’ and are going to be referred to as Pupil 1, Pupil 2 etc. Their mean age was 12.0 years. Pupils 1,2 and 3 of Primary 1 were living in the refugee campus, Pupils 4,5 and 6 of Primary 2 were living in a middle class area and Pupils 7,8 and 9 of Primary 3 were living in a very wealthy area.

**b) Bullies’ teachers:** The sample in Stages 2.2 and 2.6 were the bullies’ teachers. Seven teachers participated in these stages, two men and five women. Two were also head deputies in their schools. Their average of age was 41 years and their average years of service in public schools was 18.8 years.

**c) Bullies’ parents:** This group of the sample consisted of two couples, four mothers and three fathers. Their average age was 43 years old and they were all living in Nicosia. Four had higher education, three were secondary school graduates and four were primary school graduates.

**d) Control parents:** Nine control parents participated in this project (three from each school). Their average of age was 45 years old. Two were men and seven were women. Four were university graduates and five were secondary school graduates.

**e) Control pupils:** Nine pupils (three from each school) were selected randomly to form the group of the control pupils. Their average of age was 11.5 years and the group consisted of five boys and four girls.

### **3. The instruments**

#### **3.1 Questionnaire for teachers**

The lack of a previous research on bullying in primary schools in Nicosia led to the initiation of the first investigation with teachers that would lead to the identification of the sample. This investigation had two main aims: to reveal the three primary schools in Nicosia in which the problem of bullying is worst and to lead to a deep understanding of bullying in schools as it was experienced by teachers. In other words, the first stage of the empirical work was mainly descriptive and the relevant data were collected by means of a questionnaire (see Appendix 1, p.331).

#### **The questionnaire**

The questionnaire used with teachers in Stage 1.1 included 17 questions arranged in two parts. Part 1 (questions 1-12) referred to the issue of bullying and Part 2 (questions 1-5) aimed at the collection of demographic information about the sample.

The questions in Part 1 were produced on the basis of theoretical considerations that derived from a literature review on bullying and aggression. These considerations were also included in the formation of “The Proposed Model of Aggression”. Questions 1,2 and 3 in Part 1, were based on the definition of bullying behaviour given by Sharp and Smith (1994) and were employed to fulfil the first aim of the investigation. In addition, they referred to the role of gender in the development of bullying behaviour. Questions 4-12 of Part 2 pertained to the second aim of this investigation. Question 4 explored the factors that,

according to the teachers, could lead to the development of bullying behaviour. Questions 5 and 11 were related respectively to the actions and factors that would help the teachers to face the problem of bullying in their school. In question 7 the teachers were prompted to report the place in their school where the problem of bullying occurs more frequently. Questions 8 and 9 were related to the training teachers had on the issue of bullying during their initial studies and during in-service courses. In Question 10 teachers gave a general comment about the extent of bullying behaviour in schools in recent years. Finally, Questions 6 and 12 were open questions which gave the teachers the opportunity to express any other comments on the issue of bullying in their schools.

In Questions 1,2,3,4,5 and 11 teachers had to decide the extent to which they observed different forms of bullying in their school or the extent to which they agreed that certain factors or actions reinforce or hinder the development of bullying in schools. In Question 7 they also reported the extent to which they observe bullying behaviour in different parts of the school. In these questions teachers expressed their opinion on a 1-7 scale (1= not at all, 7= to a great extent, DK= I don't know). Whereas, Questions 8,9,10 as well as the five questions in Part two employed nominal scales.

### **The method**

After a pilot study with fifteen teachers minor alterations were made to the questionnaire regarding the clarification of the term “bullying” in Greek. Then, a selection by random sampling was initiated. In this way, every teacher in the Greek Cypriot State Primary Schools in Nicosia would have an equal chance of

being selected for inclusion in the study. In addition, random sampling would enable a further generalisation of the results to a larger population in the town of Nicosia, since this sample accurately represents the population from which it was selected (Maycut and Morehouse, 1994).

There are 55 Greek Cypriot State primary Schools in Nicosia. For the purpose of this study 29 schools out of 55 were selected to produce a 50% sample (approximately). The selection of the schools was based on the formal catalogue of Primary Schools of Nicosia provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In this catalogue the schools are listed in alphabetic order. The selection of schools was done in two parts. At first every second school in the list was selected. However, after the first selection some of the schools did not reply to this research. Thus, a second selection was initiated in which every third school was selected in the list. In this way the number of 29 schools was completed. There is also a variation in the age of pupils of each school that has been selected to participate in this study. Eight schools have 6-8-year-old children, five schools have 9-11-year-old children and ten schools have 6-11-year-old children.

According to the number of the teachers in each school, 279 questionnaires were distributed in the 29 schools. The questionnaires were given to the head teacher and the staff was kindly requested to answer them and return them to the head teacher's office by the end of the day. The head teachers posted the questionnaires to the address given at the bottom of the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were given to the main classroom teachers by the beginning of January 2001, just after Christmas holidays and were returned back by the first



week of February 2001. The response rate to the questionnaire was 71.6 % (N=200).

### **Psychometric Properties**

The reliability of the questionnaire was investigated by calculating coefficient alpha for the sample. The resulting coefficient was 0.91 for this sample. This value provides strong support for the internal consistency reliability of this questionnaire.

### **3.2 The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire**

The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) (see Appendix 2, p.338), constructed by Olweus (1996) for use in grades 3 through 10, was based on the definition of bullying, as it was manifested by Olweus (1993), and consists of 40 questions for the measurement of a number of aspects of bully/victim problems: exposure to various (physical, verbal, indirect, racial, sexual etc.) forms of bullying harassment; initiation of various forms of bullying other students; where the bullying occurs; pro-bullying and pro-victim attitudes; and the extent to which the social environment (teachers, peers, parents) are informed about and react to the bullying (Olweus, 2000). Students are expected to fill out the questionnaire anonymously within a school hour.

It can be argued that the aspects which are covered by the questionnaire arise from the main findings of studies conducted on bullying in several countries (e.g. Genta et al., 1996; Mellor, 1990; Monbusho, 1994). More specifically, in the international literature three forms of bullying are mainly manifested: physical

bullying, verbal bullying and indirect bullying (Almeida, 1999; Besag, 1989; Morita, 1985; Olweus, 1993; Sharp and Smith, 1994; Tattum, 1993). For these reasons, OBVQ refers to these three forms of bullying. It has also been shown that the bullies, victims, observers, their teachers and their parents who are the main factors that are involved in the problem are important sources of data for investigating this phenomenon (Besag, 1986; Olweus, 1978, 1993; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Sharp and Smith, 1994; Smith and Sharp, 1994; Smith et al., 1999).

Thus, the OBVQ is administered to both bullies and victims and is divided into two parts. Part 1 (i.e., questions 5-24) refers to the initiation of an act of bullying against the child who is answering the questionnaire, whereas Part 2 (questions 25-40) refers to the expression of bullying behaviour against others by this child. The wide range of variables included in the questionnaire leads to a holistic approach in the investigation of the problem.

**Table 1: The Greek Version of the OBVQ**

Aspects examined in the questionnaire	Questions	
	Bully	Victim
<b>A. Forms of Bullying</b>		
1. Physical Bullying	28,30	8,10
2. Verbal Bullying	26,31,32, 33	6,11,12,13
3. Indirect Bullying	27, 29	7, 9
<b>B. Bully and Victim characteristics</b>	1,2,3,4,15, 16,17,24,37, 38,39	1,2,3,4,24, 37,38,39
<b>C. Duration - Frequency</b>	25	5,18
<b>D. Place</b>	19	
<b>E. Persons informed about the incident</b>	20	
<b>F. Teachers' role</b>	21,35,40	
<b>G. Children as observers</b>	22	
<b>H. Parents' role</b>	23,36	

Table 1 reveals that the OBVQ is primarily aimed at measuring the extent to which the three forms of bullying, namely physical, verbal and indirect bullying, are expressed in a school by referring to the bullies as well as the victims (i.e., items 6-13 and 26-33). In addition, the characteristics of the bullies and victims are investigated by means of the OBVQ as these are the two main agents that are involved in a bullying act (i.e., items 1-4, 14-17, 24, 37-39). The duration and frequency of the problem are also examined as the time dimension of the problem could be regarded as one of the factors that distinguish a bullying act from an accidental incident (items 5,18,25). Moreover, pupils are prompted to refer to the place where the problem occurs more often (item 19) so that the teachers could know where they should focus their attention while they are doing their playground duty. Finally, the interference of the “significant others” could play a crucial role in the way the school is dealing with the problem. Thus, pupils are requested in item 20 to report the persons who are informed about the incident of bullying (usually by the victims), and the role of their teachers (items 21,35,40), parents (items 23,36) and peers (item 22) in facing the problem.

### **Psychometric Properties**

Analyses were made of the internal consistency and the test-retest reliability of the revised questionnaire on large representative samples (more than 5000 students) and the results were generally quite satisfactory (e.g. Olweus, 2000; Genta et al., 1996). More specifically, it was found out that at the individual level (i.e. with individual pupils as the subject of analysis), combinations of items for being victimized or bullying others have yielded satisfactory internal consistency reliabilities since the values of Cronbach Alpha were higher than .80 (Olweus, 2000). With regard to the various forms of validity of the questionnaire, only a

few studies have been conducted and mainly concerned with the concurrent validity with the earlier versions of the OBVQ. Olweus (1994) mentions that in the early Swedish studies (e.g, Olweus, 1978) composites of 3-5 self-report items on being bullied or bullying and attacking others, respectively, correlated in the .40 - .60 range (Pearson correlation coefficients) with reliable peer ratings on related dimensions (Olweus, 1994).

In addition, since no factor analysis was reported and according to Olweus “most of the psychometric information has not yet been published, due to lack of time” (Olweus, 2000), Table 1 (p. 96) presents the way items in the Greek version of the questionnaire were grouped according to the Sharp and Smith (1994) definition, in order to be able to refer to the three forms of bullying in the pupils’ responses, e.g. items 28,30, 8 and 10 refer to physical bullying etc.

Moreover, in regard to the Greek version of the OBVQ, an attempt was made to use the Extended Logistic Model of Rasch in order to investigate the extent to which the OBVQ can be considered as a valuable means to raise awareness on the phenomenon of bullying in Cyprus. The results of this study are still under analysis (Kyriakides et al., in preparation).

### **The method**

The method of double translation was used to examine the extent to which the Greek version of OBVQ could measure pupils’ perceptions of bullying. First, a translation was conducted from English to Greek and then a person who was not aware of the OBVQ was asked to translate the Greek version back to English. It

was found that the new English version of OBVQ, which derived from translating the Greek version back to English, and the original version of OBVQ were identical in meaning for most items. Small adjustments were made to three of the items to correct the observed discrepancies.

Second, content validity was determined for the Greek version of OBVQ by asking one lecturer of Educational Psychology, two post-graduate students and two primary teachers, who were selected on the basis of their familiarity with the problem of bullying in schools, to evaluate the content validity of the instrument. The “judges” were asked to mark-up, make marginal notes, comments on or even rewrite the items. In the light of their comments minor amendments were made, particularly where the structure used was not easily comprehensible or terms that had been used were seen as not familiar to primary pupils. The final version of the Greek version of the OBVQ met the satisfaction of each of the five “judges”. Once this process was complete, the whole procedure was repeated with a sixth judge who had not seen the questionnaire before. The outcome served to validate the version finally used to gather data.

The final version of the OBVQ was administered by the researcher to the pupils of the 6th grade of the three schools that were selected during Stage 1.1 in one forty-minute session. All the pupils of year 6 of the school sample were asked by the researcher to complete the questionnaire. Altogether students in 7 classrooms were tested.

### **3.3 Olweus list of bully characteristics**

The pilot study for the questionnaire given in Stage 1.1, revealed that the teachers had difficulties in defining bullying behaviour and distinguishing it from other forms of violent behaviour. Thus, a list of bully characteristics and behaviour patterns was regarded as a means to help them clarify their ideas about what bullying is and to avoid confusion.

The list of the bully characteristics, included in Appendix 3 (p. 351), was copied from Olweus' book "Bullying: What we know and what we can do about it" (Olweus, 1993). It was given to all the teachers that were teaching in grade 6 of the three schools (including music, PE and Design and Technology teachers) in order to identify bullies in the 6 grades of the three schools, according to their teachers' opinion.

According to my research journal in Primary 3 a discussion was held among teachers in the staff room referring to the completion of the list. As one of the teachers said to me later the teachers raised issues of confidentiality since the names of the bullies would be reported in written form. "*We don't know where these forms will end up*", he said. "*We don't want any troubles with the parents or the Ministry so we will not risk it*". They also believed that reporting the bullies would affect the good reputation of the school. After I assured them about the confidentiality of the project by telling them that their opinion would not necessarily be considered as the right one, the teachers decided to report the names of the bullies individually and orally to me. All the teachers in the three schools replied, except from one case in P3.

The pupils whose names were mentioned in most of the teachers' lists or were reported by most teachers in Primary 3 were considered as possible case studies.

### **3.4 Sociometric Peer-rating Technique**

After the identification of bullies according to their teachers' opinion by means of the Olweus list of criteria, it was necessary to check whether the bullies' peers agreed with their teachers about the existence of the bullies in their classroom. Thus, a sociometric peer-rating technique was employed to identify bullies in the 6 grades of the three schools, according to their peers' opinion.

The use of sociometric techniques has frequently raised key ethical concerns related to the possibility that "participation in sociometric assessment activities may implicitly sanction making negative statements about others or may influence children's attitudes toward or relationships with classmates in undesirable ways" (Frederickson and Furnham, 1998a, p.2). Nevertheless, the advantages of using a peer-rating technique have been discussed by many authors (For a review see Frederickson and Furnham, 1998b). First, according to Frederickson and Furnham (1998b), "as each child is rated in turn by his/her classmates, the scale provides an index of each child's acceptance by all group members. Second, because all children are put on the list, it decreases the likelihood that a child is not chosen because he or she has momentarily been forgotten" (Frederickson and Furnham, 1998b, p. 387). Third, as Asher and Hymel (1981) reported, the rating scale technique is sensitive to subtle changes in the scale criteria (Asher and Hymel, 1981 (as cited in Frederickson and

Furnham, 1998b)). Thus, training bullies in assertiveness may lead to significant changes in one of the sociometric ratings but not in the other.

The four peer-rated variables used in this study were also used by Olweus (1978) in his project on bullying problems in Scandinavia (Olweus, 1978). These were the following: He/She starts fights very often (physical aggression), He/she teases other children (indirect aggression), when someone criticizes him/her, he/she tends to answer back and protest, he/she is liked by none or almost none of the children in the classroom (popularity). The scale for the four variables was 1-7. As for the reliability of the technique, according to Olweus (1978), the reliability of the average values for the individuals in a class has often been found to lie in the region of .70-.95.

### **The method**

To avoid the possibility of negative effects on the children's relations, the peer-rating technique in this study was conducted individually. Before asking the child to proceed in rating the children of their class, the researcher asked the child to rate cards with the names of fruits or games on the scale 1-7 in order to show how much he/she liked each fruit or game. In this way, the children felt more relaxed, the technique seemed to be a play-like activity and the researcher made sure that the children understood what they should do. In addition, before going on to the peer-rating activity the researcher discussed with each child issues of confidentiality. She assured the children that what they said would be kept confidential since sometimes our judgements about other people may be wrong. She also told them that what she was asking for was their opinion and not a



critical judgement about their classmates. Then, she gave the children the chance to refuse to participate in the activity if they did not want to.

Each child in the class was asked to place cards containing the names of all their classmates below squares representing different degrees of the variable in question (each square represented a number from 1-7). The rater placed one card at a time beneath the square best suited to the child concerned. Each child thus received a score of 1-7, from each child, for every variable. The mean of the ratings on each variable was used as the subjects' score for that variable. If a child whose name appeared in the teachers' list also received a high score on the four variables according to his/her classmates' rating, he/she was considered as a possible case study.

Surprisingly, none of the children refused to participate and they all agreed about the issue of confidentiality. A few of them even asked the researcher if they could come again and talk more about it.

At the end of this stage it was revealed that the peers agreed with their teachers that the boys whose names were reported in most of the teachers' lists in the three schools were indeed presenting bullying behaviour. In this way the selection of the nine boys that presented bullying behaviour was completed according to the teachers' and the pupils' opinion.

The last stage of Phase 1 comprised the interviews with the inspectors of the three schools. The inspectors were regarded as the third important factor

involved in the educational task in the three schools, and thus, their opinion about bullying in those schools would be crucial in the investigation of the problem.

### **3.5 Interviews with the inspectors**

The interviews with the three inspectors were conducted in May 2002 in order to examine whether they would agree that there is a problem of bullying in those three schools. The interviews were semi-structured consisted of four main questions. These were the following: “How many years do you supervise this school”, “Would you say that this school has problems with bullying?”, “What are the reasons for this?”, “Could you name some pupils in this school that present bullying behaviour?”

During the interviews the three inspectors made general comments on the issue of bullying in schools. In addition, they admitted that there were informed about incidents of bullying in the three schools by the teachers. However, they could not name the bullies in those three schools. As for the reasons that promote bullying behaviour in schools the three of them agreed that family conditions and television are the most important reasons for this phenomenon in schools.

In this way, Phase 1 ended with the selection of the nine boys that would be regarded as case studies within the limits of this research project. Phase 2 aimed at the investigation of these case studies according to The Model of Empirical Work. During Phase 2 a variety of instruments including interviews and standardized tests were employed for the investigation of the case studies.

### **3.6 Semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers**

Semi-structured interviews were used in this research in Stages 2.1 and 2.2 in order to investigate the boys' family-community background their school life and attendance. The main factors that would give information about these enquiries were the boys' parents and teachers. The investigation of the components mentioned above was not an easy task as they were broad and complex. For this reason semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method of investigation since they are “ a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out” (Robson, 1993, p.229). In addition, talking face-to-face with the parents about their children's problematic behaviour in order to figure out whether family environment plays a role in that, raised issues of confidentiality and protection of privacy. Moreover, discussing bullying with the bullies' parents and teachers would raise their defensiveness. Thus, semi-structured interviews offered me “the possibility of modifying my line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives” (Robson, 1993, p.229) in a way that questionnaires cannot. Furthermore, body language and non-verbal cues would give a powerful impact to the conversation by “possibly changing or even reversing its meaning” (Robson, 1993, p.229). Notes about non-verbal cues were written in the research journal and included in the transcription of the interviews.

#### **a) Semi-structured interviews with parents and control parents**

Cypriot culture is a family oriented culture, that is to say, that family plays a crucial role in the development of basic behavioural structures in children. At this point a clarification of what can be considered as a “family” in this project is necessary.

Greek Cypriot family is not just the nuclear family, comprising the parents and their children. It has a broader sense, as it also includes the grandparents, the parents' siblings and the cousins. In many cases the family members live in the same area or next to each other. So it is common for children in Cyprus to create equally strong bonds with all the members of the broader family and especially their grandparents.

However, parents' relationship with their children is the basic bond on which the relationship of the children with the other members of the family is developed. In addition, as parental interaction with their children affects their socialization from the very beginning of their life, it can also contribute to the enhancement or the inhibition of bullying behaviour.

Parenting is strongly influenced by parental perceptions about the child and their behaviour at home. These parents were asked to give some information about their child's behaviour at home, as the information they get about their behaviour at school is always second hand and usually raise their defensiveness towards the school.

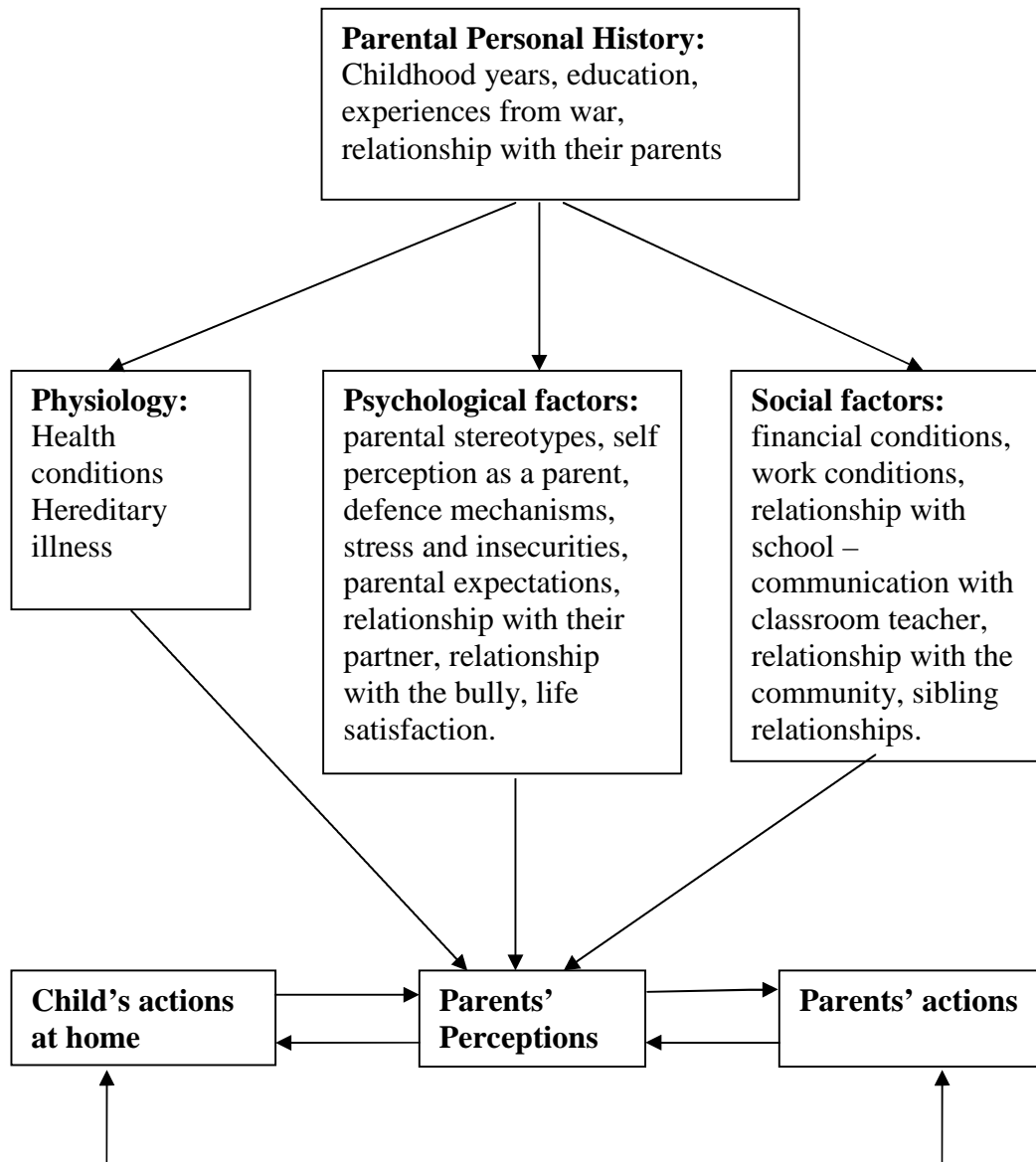
### **The questions**

Parental perceptions could not be regarded as a monolithic component in the investigation of bullying, but the sum total of a variety of factors that consist a pattern of life for each individual parent and contribute to the development of the parent's personality. For this reason the interviews with the parents comprised a combination of a structured and semi-structured interview and were divided into

seven parts (see Appendix 4, p. 353). The first part was an introductory part seeking to get information about the parents' personal life history. The second part was about the parents' job and generally the socio-economic status of the family. The third part was asking for a description of the family structure and the latest events that may affect family life. The fourth part referred to the boys' behaviour at home and to the relationships of the family members. The fifth part asked for an account of the parents' feelings and thoughts about the bully and for their perception about his feelings and thoughts about them. The sixth part sought for information about the parents' relation with the school and mainly their cooperation with the class teacher and, finally the last part was a general question to the parents in order to figure out the level of their life satisfaction.

The factors investigated by means of parents' interviews were also included in the Model of Parents' perceptions about Bullying or Bullies (Figure 3, p.108) that will be seen as the framework for the parents' interview analysis. According to this model parental health conditions, psychological characteristics, social characteristics and personal history are the basic factors that affect their perception about their child and their child's behaviour at home. In addition, parental perceptions regarding bullying or bullies could be considered primarily as a reaction to the child's behaviour and can be manifested into actions of reward or punishment. In this way, parental actions can not only reinforce or change bullying behaviour but they can also change or reinforce parental perceptions about bullies or bullying according to the child's reaction to them. Thus, it seems that there is an interaction between actions and perceptions of parents in case of bullying.

**Figure 3: The Model of Parents' Perceptions about Bullying or Bullies**



Of course in the context of conversation with different parents the order of the questions was sometimes modified, the way they were worded changed, new questions were added for clarification or others were left out as they were inappropriate with a particular interviewee. In addition, counseling skills were employed to facilitate the conversation around issues like domestic violence or drug abuse.

The invitation for the interview was directed to the parents of the nine boys through a phone call. The researcher informed them that she was conducting a research about children's behaviour at home and at school. Then, the parents were kindly asked to meet the researcher at school or elsewhere they would feel comfortable and talk to her about their child's behaviour at home. Finally, two couples, four mothers and three fathers participated in this study. Two of the interviews were taken at the parents' home in a refugee campus and the rest took place at schools. One interview was taken at the researcher's home as the mother of the child suggested so by stating that she would feel more comfortable there. The parents' average age was 43 and they all lived in Nicosia. However, six of them were refugees.

The same procedure was used to obtain data from the control parents.

#### **b) Semi-structured interviews with class teachers**

According to The Proposed Model of Aggression the interpretation of an act as aggressive or non- aggressive is derived from two main persons that are actively involved in the course of an act. These are the aggressor(s) and the recipient(s). However, in the case of school bullying, teachers, as observers, assert their own interpretation of the act according to their own perceptions. In this way they can also define an act as bullying.

It seems that the interpretation of an act as bullying by the teachers is initiated at two levels. In the first level there is an interpretation of an act in a behaviouristic way. Thus, when teachers see a child bullying another child they interpret their behaviour as a common phenomenon that takes place in school.

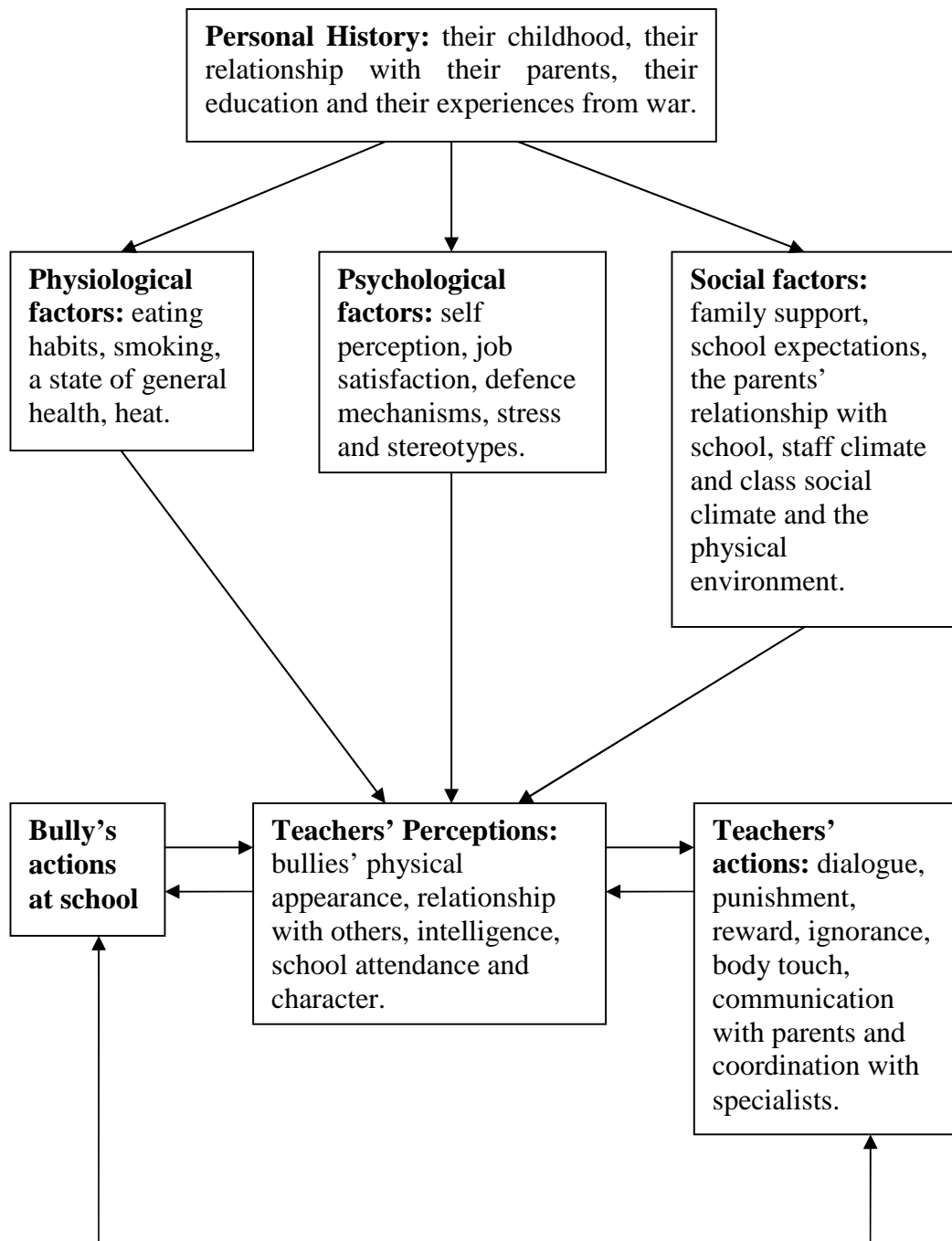
On the other hand, in a similar situation in another school a teacher may personalize the problem by asserting the thesis that “Pupil A bullies pupil B and so pupil A is a bully”. In this second level of interpretation the understanding of an act is projected to the person that initiates the act creating a simultaneous perception about them. In this way a pupil can be regarded as a bully by one teacher but not another since their nomination is subjected to their individual perceptions. This fact led to the necessity to investigate the factors that can possibly affect teachers’ perceptions about the bullies or bullying and consequently, determine the level of their interpretation of an act. This was done by means of teachers’ interviews that will be now analysed on the basis of The Model of Teachers’ perceptions about Bullying or Bullies (Figure 4, p.111).

According to this model the main variables that may affect teachers’ perceptions are their physiology, their psychological input and their social environment. These three factors are influenced by the teachers’ personal experience as a result of their individual life journey. Then, they become part of the teachers’ perceptions as they contribute to their development and, in this way, they affect the initiation of their acts which in turn reinforce or hinder the child’s acts.

The physiology of the teacher variable refers to the factors likely to affect the teachers’ physiological state, for example eating habits and health conditions. When the timetable gets overloaded with extra curricula activities teachers do not have time to eat properly at school. In addition, teachers may be ill but still have to teach and do their playground duty throughout the day sometimes in very high temperatures. These conditions can enhance their tiredness.



**Figure 4: The Model of Teacher's Perceptions about Bullying or Bullies**



Furthermore, the social factors referred to in this model are factors outside the teachers' private space which also affect their perceptions about the bullies or bullying. These include family support, school expectations, teachers'

relationship with parents, staff climate, class social climate and the physical environment. Finally, teachers' psychological input will be regarded in terms of self-perception, stereotypes, defence mechanisms, stress, job satisfaction and personal expectations. This input is strongly affected by teachers' personal histories. In the case of Greek Cypriot teachers the main points of their personal histories that were discussed throughout the interview were: their childhood years, their education, their experiences from war and their motives to become teachers.

This model, as all the other models that are included in this study, is an attempt to organise the factors mentioned above in order to investigate teachers' perceptions. However, these factors do not function in isolation from each other but in a holistic way as patterns of the teachers' personality and behaviour.

### **The questions**

After giving some general information about themselves the teachers were prompted to answer to five main questions. These were: What is it like to work in this school in relation to other schools? What is it like to work in this class in relation to other classes? What is the relationship of the children in this school? What is the attitude of these children towards schoolwork? How do you see yourself as a teacher in today's school? These questions were taken from the work of Olweus in Sweden (Olweus, 1978).

### **3.7 Role Play**

Stage 2.3 was a role-play activity with the bullies which aimed at investigating the bullies' perceptions about bullying.

Role-play activities are very desirable to children and thus they have been successfully used with children and adolescents in an effort to investigate their behaviour. According to Epps (1997) in role play activities “ Semi-structured scripts are used to create a situation which the young person is asked to deal with it” (Epps in Varma (Ed.), 1997 p. 62).

Role-play was used in this project for two main reasons. Firstly, it could be a pleasant and easy way to get bullies talk about bullying without being defensive by feeling judged or accused. Secondly, through role-play the bullies would have the chance to explore new ways of responding to an aggressive situation.

### **The procedure**

Each boy came in the room and sat on the floor opposite to the researcher. When the boys were informed by the researcher that they would do a bit of drama they all agreed happily to play with her.

Then the researcher used a semi-structured script referring to an incident of bullying between two boys at school in order to create a situation (see Appendix 5, p.355). Next, the researcher pretended to be the bully by putting a scarf around her neck and talked to the boy about what he did that morning and about being punished. When the researcher took the scarf from around her neck she became her self again and asked the boy to comment on the bully’s intentions and behaviour. The researcher repeated the same procedure pretending to be the victim.

Some of the boys were so much involved in the situation that they opened a direct dialogue with the “bully” or the “victim” taking the role of their friend as a neutral observer throughout the play.

The boys’ participation to the role play activity led them through a process of identification with the bully and the victim which enabled them to talk about the feelings, thoughts and perceptions of the two main participants in an act of bullying.

### **3.8 The Olweus (1978) Q-sort inventory**

The Olweus Q-sort inventory (see Appendix 6, p.357) that was used in this study was constructed and employed by Olweus in the second Solna investigation (Olweus, 1978). The reason that it was used in this study was that the particular inventory investigated a variety of issues related to aggression e.g. closeness to parents, and could reveal a more holistic picture of the boys’ reality. In addition, it can easily be used with the bullies’ parents and teachers. Thus, its results could enable a comparison between the teachers’, parents’ and bullies’ descriptions of the bullies’ life and personality.

Within the framework of this study the inventory was administered to the bullies’ in order to investigate the bullies’ perceptions about their aggression, to the bullies’ parents and teachers’ in order to investigate their perceptions about the bullies’ aggression, to the control parents in order to compare their replies with the bullies’ parents’ replies about their children’s aggression and finally to

the control pupils in order to compare the bullies' replies and the control pupils' replies about their own aggression.

### **The questionnaire**

The Olweus Q-sort inventory includes 57 items, in the form of statements, that can be roughly divided into five main areas: aggression and violence (items 3, 5, 6, 9, 14, 18, 22, 26, 31, 32, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44, 51, 55, 57), anxiety (items 13, 16, 20, 28, 33, 40, 45), self-esteem (items 8, 10, 15, 24, 29, 38, 48, 52, 56), identification (items 2, 11, 17, 21, 25, 34, 36, 46, 47, 49), closeness to parents (items 7, 12, 23, 27, 30, 42, 50, 53). In addition, four filler items were included which were not related to any of the former four areas (items 1, 4, 54, 19).

These main areas were selected on the basis of theoretical considerations of the nature of bully problems. The boys were asked to grade how well each statement applied to him on a scale (1-7) from seven response options: applies very poorly to me, applies poorly to me, applies fairly poorly to me, applies neither well nor poorly to me, applies fairly well to me, applies well to me, applies very well to me. Respectively, the parents and the teachers of the boys had to decide how well each statement applied to their son or pupil. The wording of the statement was the same as for the boys, except that the "I" form of the statement was changed to the third person, for example, "I like to read books on my free time" was changed to "He likes to read books on his free time". Corresponding changes were made for the seven response alternatives: Applies well to him etc.

### **Psychometric Characteristics**

A factor analysis was carried out on the Q-inventory data from all the boys in ordinary classes (N=197) in the second Solna investigation (Olweus, 1978) which revealed four clear factors. The largest factor (I) comprising items from the areas of anxiety, self-esteem and identification seemed to reflect feelings of maladjustment and inadequacy. Eleven items defined factor II, which was called aggression. The third factor (III) comprised items concerned with self-confidence, independence and perhaps toughness. Factor IV primarily contained items suggesting a close, positive, trustful contact with parents and with adults in general. This factor was called closeness to parents. The internal consistency reliability values (alpha coefficients) of the four factor variables were .85 for factor I, .82 for factor II, .77 for factor III and .81 for factor IV.

As to the validity of the factor scales, in the second Solna investigation peer ratings were collected for the variables Starts Fights, Verbal Protest, Tease, Aggression Target and Popularity on 105 pupils. There were substantial positive correlations between the factor variable aggression (II) and the aggressive peer-rated variables, the coefficients being .47, .49 and .46 with Start Fights, Verbal Protest and Tease respectively. These peer rated variables were also positively correlated with the factor variable self-confidence (III), the coefficients being .42, .42 and .46. The sum of the two factor variables II and III correlated .61 with the sum of the three aggressive peer-rated variables. Moreover, the first factor variable, feelings of maladjustment and inadequacy, correlated .31 with the peer variable Aggression Target and -.29 with Popularity. Finally, there was a correlation of -.25 between the factor variable Closeness to Parents or Other

Adults (IV) and the peer-rated tendency to answer back and protest against a criticizing teacher (Verbal Protest).

### **Present Study**

Before administering the Olweus Q-sort inventory a double translation was initiated and a pilot study was conducted with ten eleven-year-old children and their parents. As a result, minor linguistic alterations were made to the Greek version of the inventory without affecting the content of the statements. Then, the researcher administered individually the inventories to the boys, their parents, their teachers, the control pupils and the control parents. The group of the control pupils was randomly selected from the bullies' classes. The completion of the inventory took about twenty minutes. In addition to item scores, the average value for all items belonging to a particular area was calculated for each individual.

### **3.9 The Self Image Profile For Children (SIP-C)**

In Stage 2.9 of this project the Butler Self Image Profile For Children (SIP-C) (Butler, 2001) was administered to the nine boys to investigate their self-image and self-esteem. The Butler Self Image Profile For Children (SIP-C) consists of 25 familiar self-descriptions: 12 of a positive nature, 12 of a negative slant and one neutral item. All self-descriptions are words or short statements generated by children (Appendix 7, p.361).

The rationale for using SIP-C in this project lies in that the SIP-C is built on an acknowledgement of both Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955, Bannister and Fransella, 1986) and the developmental and organisational model of self as

proposed by Harter (1999). Personal Construct Theory and the Harter Self Perception Profile for Children or SPPC (Harter, 1985) were also used with the nine boys, named as bullies within the course of this project. This fact would enable the correlation of the results of the two tests. In addition, the SIP-C is a quick and easy way to assess the child's view of his self through a variety of notions that were elicited from a broad sample of children. Thus, it could be regarded as a test based on the realisation and acceptance of children's own perceptions of themselves which could be used in order to enhance an understanding of the bully's vulnerabilities and to direct suitable intervention programmes.

### **The scales of SIP-C**

The SIP-C is intended for use with children aged 7 to 11 and it provides a measure of:

a) ***Self-Image***: The children are first prompted to rate their 'Actual Self' by indicating 'How I am' against each of the 25 items using a 0-6 Likert type scales. The positive self-image (SI +ve) score is the sum of scores on items 1-12 (range 0-72), the negative self-image (SI -ve) score is the sum of scores on items 14-25 (range 0-72), the sense of difference score (SD) is the score on item 13 and the self-esteem score (SE) is the sum of discrepancy scores on items 1-25. The age and gender mean for SI +ve for 11-year-old boys is 53.40 (SD: 9.13) and the age and gender mean for SI-ve is 25.44 (SD: 13.07). A Self-image positive score that is above the age-and-gender mean, as it was given in the manual, would suggest that the child has a positive self-image. Conversely, a self-image positive score below the age-and-gender mean would intimate that the child fails to construe



himself in terms of positive attributes. The SIP-C cut-off scores of positive and negative self-image by age and gender for 11-year-old boys are according to the manual 35 for positive self-image (SI +ve) and 52 for negative self-image (SI – ve). SI+ve scores below 35 would be a cause of concern, as would be SI-ve scores above 52.

b) *Self-Esteem*: Then the children are asked to rate their ‘Ideal Self’ by indicating ‘How I would like to be’ against the same 25 items. The discrepancy between ‘How I am’ and ‘How I would like to be’ scores provides an estimate of self-esteem (Butler and Green, 1998, Harter, 1999). A high score reflects a wide discrepancy between ‘How I am’ and ‘How I would like to be’ and is therefore indicative of low self-esteem. A low score suggests a correspondence between ‘How I am’ and ‘How I would like to be’ and could be interpreted as reflecting high self-esteem. The SIP-C cut-off scores of self-esteem by age and gender for 11-year-old boys are according to the manual 76. SE scores above this value would be a cause of serious concern. However, a child could have very low self-esteem but low discrepancies if their ideal self is also very low. For this reason the results on this variable of this test should be seen with caution.

The “Sense of Difference” score (item 13) reflects the child’s sense of uniqueness. Scores toward the top end of the range would intimate that the child views the self in terms of more separateness. However, since the Sense of Difference in the SIP-C is reported only by one item its value could not be regarded as reliable. Thus, in this study only the values of Positive Self-Image, Negative Self-Image and Self-Esteem will be considered.

### **Psychometric Characteristics**

Standardisation and validation of the SIP-C was undertaken in 5 primary schools in Leeds with 513 children (Butler, 2001). In addition, a factor analysis of the SIP-C revealed 6 clear factors: behaviour (items 14,16,17,19,20,21,23,24), social (items 1,2,3,5,8,11), emotional (items 13,15,18,22), outgoing (items 4,7,9), academic (items 6,10) and resourceful (item 25). Item 12 failed to load on any factor and was given the label 'Appearance'. Moreover, the Self Perception Profile for Children or SPPC (Harter, 1985) was used as a comparison measure in order to check SIP-C construct validity, since the SPPC construction is very similar to that of SIP-C. This comparison led to an indication of a significant relationship ( $p < 0.01$ ) between SIP-C scale scores and SPPC Self Worth domain and between SIP-C aspects of self with corresponding Harter SPPC domains (Butler, 2001, p.21). Finally, SIP-C reliability was investigated by calculating coefficient alpha in relation to self-image. The resulting coefficients were 0.69 for both Positive self-image and Negative self-image.

### **The method**

Before the administration of the SIP-C to the nine boys who participated in this study the SIP-C was translated into Greek with the method of double translation and a piloting was initiated in order to check whether the SIP-C content was meaningful to the population to whom it would be administered.

Firstly the SIP-C was translated from English to Greek by the researcher and then an educationalist who was not aware of the SIP-C was asked to translate the Greek version back to English. It was found that the new version of SIP-C which derived from translating the Greek version back to English, and the original

version of SIP-C were identical in meaning for most items. After administering the SIP-C to 20 11- year-old boys for piloting purposes small adjustments were made to reverse the observed discrepancies in language.

Finally, the SIP-C was given to the nine boys, nominated as “bullies” in this project from January 2002 till April 2002.

### **3.10 Self Perception Profile For Children**

The Harter Self –Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) (see Appendix 8, p.364) was used in Stage 2.10 of this project to investigate the bullies’ self-perception. This test is a revision of the Perceived Competence Scale for Children (Harter, 1979, 1982) and it contains six separate subscales tapping five specific domains, as well as global self-worth. The six domains are the following: Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, Behavioural Conduct and Global Self-Worth. Scholastic Competence reflects the child’s perception of his/her competence or ability within the realm of scholastic performance. Social Acceptance taps the degree to which one has friends, feels one is popular and feels that most kids like them. Athletic Competence is relevant to sports and outdoor games. Physical Appearance refers to the degree a child is happy with the way he/she looks. Behavioural Conduct figures out the degree to which children like the way they behave, do the right thing, act the way they are supposed to, avoid getting into trouble and do the things they are suppose to do. Finally, Global Self – Worth examines the extent to which the child likes oneself as a person and is happy with the way one is leading one’s life.

The assumption on which the design of the SPPC was based is that one's feelings of worth should be tapped directly and not by summing responses to an aggregate of items which ask about a wide variety of self-descriptions. However, by assessing global self-worth separately or independently of the specific competence domains, one can examine the relationship between global self-worth and the domain specific perceptions of competence. This implication was built on the theoretical aspects of James (1892) and Cooley (1909). For James (1892), global self-esteem represented the ratio of one's successes to one's pretensions or aspirations toward success in the various domains of one's life. In addition, Cooley (1909) argued that the self represents the reflected appraisals of significant others.

Obviously, although the theoretical background differs between the SIP-C and the SPPC, they both reflect the same aspects of self-perception. Thus, in this project the SPPC was used with the nine boys, nominated as "bullies", as a measure of comparison of the SIP-C results.

### **The scale of SPPC**

Each of the six subscales contains six items, constituting a total of 36 items and the initial target population was third through sixth grades. Within each subscale, three of the items are worded such that the first part of the statement reflects high competence or adequacy and three of the items are worded such that the first part of the statement reflects low competency or adequacy. The six subscale items are presented in the following order for the first six items on the scale and then continue to repeat themselves in that order throughout the instrument: Scholastic Competence (items 1,7,13,19,25,31), Social Acceptance (items 2,8,14,20,26,32),

Athletic Competence (items 3,9,15,21,27,33), Physical Appearance (items 4,10,16,22,28,34), Behavioural Conduct (items 5,11,17,23,29,35), Global Self-Worth (items 6,12,18,24,30,36).

### **Psychometric Properties**

The internal consistency was quite acceptable since they were between .70 and .86 (Harter, 1985). Moreover, the subscale means fluctuate around the value of 3.0 which is above the midpoint of the scale. However, there were differences associated with both gender and grade level for certain subscales. In addition, there was some sample variation. The majority of standard deviations fall between .50 and .85 indicating considerable variation among individuals. The factor loadings for each subscale were also substantial and there were no cross loadings greater than .18 (Harter, 1985). Nevertheless, the particular content of the factors that do emerge may vary from sample to sample, depending upon the subject population, the particular milieu, as well as the educational philosophy espoused by the school administration.

### **The method**

The SPPC was administered individually to the boys by the researcher between January and April 2002. The questions were worded in two-choice formats (e.g. Really true for me – Sort of true for me) (see Appendix 8, p.364). After filling out the information at the top of the scale the researcher introduced the scale as a survey and discussed what surveys are, stressing that there are no wrong or right answers. Then, the researcher explained the question format to the boy while doing the example. After that the researcher read both sentences before allowing the pupil to select the one most like him monitoring the pupils' responses

throughout the instrument to ensure that he continues to mark only one box. Items are scored either 4,3,2 or 1 where 4 represents the most adequate self-judgement and 1 represents the least adequate self-judgement. Scoring results in a total of six subscale means which will define a given child's profile.

### **3.11 The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III)**

According to the theory of Social Cognition cognitive development plays a crucial role in the presentation of bullying behaviour in children and especially to the expression of particular types of bullying. Social isolation, for example, demands a level of manipulation of others on behalf of the bully (Sutton et al., 1999) and because of this, it is more frequently expressed by children with high cognitive abilities, whereas children with lower cognitive abilities tend to use more physical aggression (Sprafkin, 1987).

The investigation of the bullies' cognitive abilities in this study aimed at exploring the cognitive abilities of the boys who participated in this study and to examine whether they presented a variety of cognitive abilities.

The exploration of the bullies' cognitive abilities was done by the use of the Greek version of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III) (Wechsler, 1992). The Greek version of Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III), based on the British version edited in 1992, is an individually administered clinical instrument for assessing the intellectual ability of children aged from 6 years through to 16 years, 11 months and was adjusted and

standardised by the Psychometric Laboratory of the Department of Philosophy, Education and Psychology of the University of Athens in 1997.

### **The scale**

The Greek version of Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III) consists of 13 subtests, each measuring a different facet of intelligence. The child's performance on these various measures is summarised in three composite scores, the Verbal, Performance and Full Scale IQs, which provide estimates of the individual's intellectual abilities. The 13 subtests of the WISC-III are organised into two groups: the Verbal subtests and the Performance subtests, according to their scale. There are 6 subtests in the first group and 7 subtests in the second group.

***Verbal Subtests:*** The six subtests that yield a composite score for verbal ability are the following: information (a series of orally presented questions that tap the child's knowledge about common events, objects, places and people); similarities (a series of orally presented pairs of words for which the child explains the similarity of the everyday objects or concepts they represent); arithmetic (a series of arithmetic problems which the child solves mentally and responds to orally); vocabulary (a series of words presented orally which the child defines); comprehension (a series of orally presented questions that require the child to solve everyday problems or to show understanding of social rules and concepts); digit span (a series of orally presented number of sequences which the child repeats verbatim for Digits Forward and in reverse order for Digits Backward).

***Performance Subtests:*** Seven subtests yield the score for the performance IQ. These are the following: picture completion (a set of colourful pictures of common objects and scenes each of which is missing an important part which the child identifies); coding (a series of simple shapes or numbers each paired with a simple symbol. The child draws the symbol in its corresponding shape or under its corresponding number, according to a key); picture arrangement (a set of colourful pictures, presented in mixed- up order, which the child rearranges into a logical story sequence); block design (a set of modelled or printed two-dimensional geometric patterns which the child replicates using two colour cubes); object assembly (a set of jig-saw puzzles of common objects, each presented in a standardised configuration, which the child assembles to form a meaningful whole); symbol search (a series of paired group of symbols, each pair consisting of a target group and a search group. The child scans the two groups and indicates whether or not a target symbol appears in the search group); mazes (a set of increasingly difficult mazes, printed in a response booklet, which the child solves with a pencil).

### **Psychometric Properties**

The reliability coefficients (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) for 11-year-olds of the Greek version of WISC-III subtests was between .70 and .83 for the verbal subtests, between .63 and .81 for the performance subtests (Georgas et al., 1997). The equivalent rates for the British version was .76 and .88 for the verbal subtests and .65 and .84 for the performance subtests (Wechsler, 1992).



As for the validity, there were not any validation studies initiated for the Greek version. Thus, the factor analysis initiated in the British version was adopted during the standardisation of the Greek version. The Verbal Comprehension factor consists of the Information, Similarities, Vocabulary and Comprehension subtests. The Perceptual Organisation factor includes the Picture Completion, Picture Arrangement, Block Design and Object Assembly subtests. The Freedom and Distractibility factor consists of the Arithmetic and Digit Span subtests and finally, the Processing Speed factor includes the Coding and Symbol Search subtests (Wechsler, 1992, p. 79).

### **The method**

The test used in this study was translated and standardised in Greek. An educational psychologist administered the test individually to the nine boys who presented bullying behaviour between the 1<sup>st</sup> of February and 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2002. Verbal and Performance subtests were administered in alternating order to help the examiner maintain the boys' interest during testing.

### **3.12 Personal Construct Repertory Grids**

The repertory grids based on the philosophical idea of Personal Constructs, as it was introduced by Kelly (1955), were used in this project to investigate their relationships with the 'significant others' in their life.

### **The constructs**

There were two kinds of constructs in the boys' grids (see Appendix 9, p.373). The first three couples of constructs were 'elicited' whereas the rest of the seven

were given by the researcher. The given constructs were the following: good to me – bad to me, makes me feel good- makes me feel bad, likes being with me - doesn't like being with me, believes I am good- doesn't believe I am good, shouts when she/he gets angry- doesn't shout when he/she gets angry, makes fun of others – doesn't make fun of others, hits when he/she gets angry, doesn't hit when he/she gets angry. The first four of the given constructs are referring to the boys' relationships with their significant others and the last three are referring to the forms of bullying the significant others may present.

### **The method**

The boys were asked to complete a set of cards showing the names of a number of significant others in their life. They were then asked to give an important way in which two of the persons differed from the third. This was repeated several times to elicit a range of three bi-polar constructs, which then constituted how each boy interpreted the behaviour of people important in his life.

## **4. Ethical Considerations**

Researching bullying or bullies is a sensitive issue since it has to do with the investigation of peoples' personal relationships within families and schools leading to the disclosure of harsh material or the discussion of peoples' private lives. This realisation should be taken seriously into consideration especially when the investigation of this phenomenon is undertaken in small societies where stigmatisation can easily occur or be reinforced.

Thus, throughout this study I came across a variety of ethical considerations. For example I had to find a way to tell the participants, either they were adults or children, the topic and the aim of the research in a way that it would not offend them or raise their defensiveness. In addition, I had to maintain confidentiality but at the same time I was acknowledging my responsibility to inform the school about children been abused or witnessed physical violence at home.

Nevertheless, despite the different ethical codes and guidelines that have been developed over time in various countries (Lindsay, 2000), Cyprus has not yet developed such a code regarding research and most specifically research with children. This was a matter of serious concern throughout this study since every stage of the research had to be carried out within a set of ethical principles which would protect the participants' privacy and sustain confidentiality.

The ethical considerations that appeared in this project led to the adaptation of the following techniques in order to facilitate data collection in an "ethical way". First, written permission was acquired from the Department of Primary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture since this study concerned most of the primary schools in Nicosia and in order to coordinate the responses of the different participants, namely, the teachers, the pupils, the parents and the inspectors (Lindsay, 2000). Second, all the participants were informed about the topic and the aim of this study. However, the parents of the bullies and the bullies were told that the research was about "children's behaviour at home and at school" and that they were randomly selected. Of course, bullies themselves took part in the sociometric technique so they could not assume that they were

pointed out by their classmates and teachers as the ‘bullies’ in their class. In addition, a group of control pupils were also used in this study to avoid stigmatisation of the bullies. Then, written permission was taken from the parents, regarding their participation and their children’s participation in the study. All the participants, both adults or children, were also given the right to refuse to participate. Third, no individual or school is named in this study. Pseudonyms are used as appropriate. What is more, the use of semi-structured interviews including open ended questions allowed the participants to define the issues that were most important to them and at the same would enable me to use counselling skills in order to support them when they disclosed heavy material about their private life. Finally, throughout the different stages of this research the participants were assured that there was no right or wrong answer and that it was fine for them to say ‘I don’t know’ or ‘I don’t want to answer that’ (Oakley, 2000).

Nevertheless, as a researcher I knew that my relationship with the participants in this study was one with no past, but most importantly with no future. Thus, in my interaction with them I was attempting to set certain limits in order to avoid personalisation of the situation. This, however, was not an easy task since the only way to know their reality was to be a part of it.

## **Chapter 4: The Results**

### **1. Phase 1:**

The results of this project will be presented in this chapter following the structure of The Model of Empirical Work (see Figure 2, p.86-87). As it was noted in the methodology section the empirical work was conducted in two main phases. Phase 1 started with Stage 1.1, named as the Identification of the sample, which had two main aims: to identify the three primary schools in Nicosia in which the problem of bullying is worse than in the other schools according to the teachers' opinion and to lead to a deep understanding of bullying in schools as it was experienced by teachers. However, within the word limit of this thesis I am going to deal only with the results of the first question of the questionnaire which is related to the first and primary aim of its use.

### **1.1 First Questionnaire with Teachers**

From the 279 teachers in the 29 schools, that received the questionnaire (see Appendix 1, p.331) 200 replied (71.6 %). In question 1 the teachers reported the extent to which the three forms of bullying, that is to say physical, verbal and psychological existed between the pupils in their school according to their own experience using a 1-7 scale. Then the means across teachers on each of the three forms of bullying were taken for each school and were averaged in order to produce an overall mean bullying score per school. Table 1 (see p.133) presents the overall mean bullying scores of the teachers' replies per school and the standard deviations.

The three schools that presented the highest mean value for bullying were S14, S20 and S25. However, S14 was not included in the study for two reasons. Firstly, only 3 from the 10 teachers of the school answered the questionnaire. In addition, the age of the pupils in that school was six to nine years old. Children of that age would find it difficult to respond to the requirements of the tests that would be employed in this study. Consequently, the three schools finally selected were S20, S25 and S23, as S23 had the fourth highest mean value on the three forms of bullying.

In this study S20 will be referred to as Primary 1 (P1), S23 as Primary 2 (P2) and S25 as Primary 3 (P3). The age of children in P1 was six to eleven year-olds and in P2 and P3 nine to eleven year-olds.

The social background of the three schools was very different. P1 was a school situated in a refugee campus and it was maintained by a socially deprived community. P2 was one of the oldest schools situated in a middle class area in a suburb just outside the city centre of Nicosia. P3 was a high reputation old school situated in the commercial area of the city centre. Children in that school lived in wealthy areas outside the city centre and went to that school because their parents were working in the commercial centre of the town of Nicosia.

**Table 1: Overall mean scores of the teachers' replies per school**

School	Mean Value for the three forms of bullying	Standard Deviation
S1.	3.33	1.50
S2.	3.83	1.24
S3.	2.75	1.60
S4.	3.62	1.42
S5.	3.24	1.89
S6.	3.60	2.40
S7.	2.24	1.03
S8.	3.55	0.98
S9.	4.20	1.46
S10.	4.22	2.46
S11.	2.46	0.80
S12.	3.40	1.51
S13.	4.23	2.38
S14.	4.88	1.65
S15.	3.41	1.21
S16.	2.49	1.37
S17.	2.80	1.07
S18.	4.26	2.33
S19.	3.75	1.44
S20.	4.79	1.65
S21.	4.33	1.33
S22.	3.33	1.77
S23.	4.52	1.08
S24.	3.50	1.66
S25.	4.55	1.87
S26.	3.27	1.65
S27.	3.06	3.23
S28.	3.76	1.56
S29.	3.58	1.43

## **1.2 The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ)**

The selection of the three schools was followed by the administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) to the pupils of the sixth grade of the three schools (Stage 1.2), in order to find out possible agreement between the pupils' and teachers' perceptions about the level of bullying in the three schools. The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) was completed by 161 6<sup>th</sup> grade pupils in the three schools. Inspection of each school's results suggested

that they are very similar so no comparisons by school were to be conducted.

Children's replies to the questionnaire will be presented in Tables 2 and 3. Thus,

Tables 2 and 3 present the frequencies of the three schools' combined results about being bullied and bullying others at school, respectively.

**Table 2: Children's replies about being bullied in their school**

Items	Frequencies (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
6. I was called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way (verbal bullying)	35 22.2 %	17 10.8 %	12 7.6 %	14 8.9 %	80 50.6 %
7. I was left out of things on purpose, excluded me from their group of friends, or completely ignored me (indirect bullying)	19 12.1 %	10 6.4 %	8 5.1 %	5 3.2 %	115 73.2 %
8. I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors (physical bullying)	10 6.3 %	6 3.8 %	11 7.0 %	7 4.4 %	124 78.5 %
9. Other students told lies or spread false rumours about me and tried to make others dislike me (indirect bullying)	19 11.9 %	13 8.2 %	7 4.4 %	8 5.0 %	112 70.4 %
10. I had money or other things taking away from me or damaged (physical bullying)	19 11.9 %	4 2.5 %	2 1.3 %	2 1.3 %	132 82.5 %
11. I was threatened or forced to do things that I didn't want to (verbal bullying)	22 13.8 %	8 5.0 %	3 1.9 %	6 3.8 %	120 75.5 %
12. I was bullied with mean names or comments about my race or colour (verbal bullying)	13 8.1 %	8 5.0 %	1 0.6 %	8 5.0 %	131 81.4 %
13. I was bullied with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning (verbal bullying)	21 13.1 %	7 4.4 %	6 3.8 %	9 4.4 %	117 73.1 %
14. I was bullied in any other way	20 12.7 %	7 4.4 %	5 3.2 %	7 4.4 %	119 75.3 %

**Note:** Column 1: Once or twice the last couple of months  
 Column 2: Two or three times a month  
 Column 3: Once a week  
 Column 4: Many times a week  
 Column 5: It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months



Table 2 (p. 134) refers to the children's replies about being bullied in their school. So it only includes the frequencies in the items related to the issues of 'being bullied at school' (items 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14). Table 3 refers to the children's replies about bullying others in their school. So it only includes the frequencies in the items related to the issues of 'bullying others at school' (items 26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34). In both tables every item was put into a category according to the form of bullying it was related to e.g. verbal bullying, physical bullying etc. in order to be able to compare the results of the pupils' responses with the results of the teachers' replies in the questionnaire for teachers. The category for each of the items was written in brackets.

Frequencies in Table 2 suggest that children in those schools appear to have experienced verbal bullying more frequently than other forms of bullying (items 6,11,12,13). They also experienced physical bullying (items 8 and 10) but not to a great extent. According to the notes from participant observation, physical bullying was more common in Primary 1 than in the other two schools. Finally, children seemed to experience indirect bullying to a considerable extent (items 7 and 9). According to my research journal indirect bullying was more common in P3, the school that was situated in a more wealthy, high -class area, than in other schools.

Moreover, Table 3 (see p.137) presents children's replies about bullying others. The frequencies in Table 3 are lower than those in Table 2. This may be due to two main reasons: first, the questionnaire was not individually distributed. Rather the children were asked to answer it in the classroom during a teaching period.

This fact raised issues of confidentiality as some of the children were repeatedly asking the researcher whether she was going to disclose their answers to the head teacher or their parents. In one case, a boy refused to complete the questionnaire and prompted the rest of his classmates to do the same.

Secondly, the questions in this second part of the questionnaire (items 26-33) were very assertive and powerful in meaning leading some of the children to become very defensive e.g. in item 28 a potential bully is directly prompted to declare in written form that they hit, kicked or pushed their victim. Moreover, in completing a questionnaire about bullying they did not have the chance to legitimate their actions as bullies. However, it seems that verbal bullying (items 26,31,32,33) was initiated more frequently than other forms of bullying in those three schools. Physical bullying (items 28,30) did not happen so often and indirect bullying (items 27,29) was even more rare. Nevertheless, the children who admitted bullying others used all the three forms of bullying.

Table 4 (p. 138) presents the overall frequencies of being bullied or bullying others (N=161) (items 5 and 25 respectively). In the three schools (P1, P2 and P3) 83 children over all (51.6 %) reported that they had been bullied at school the last couple of months once, 2 or 3 times a month, once a week or several times a week. A study conducted by Olweus in Bergen using the OBVQ reported that 19.5 % of approximately 11-year-old children reported that they had been bullied in their school (Olweus, 1993). This percentage is much lower than the percentage of victims in the three schools that participated in this study.

**Table 3: Children's replies about bullying others in their school**

Items	Frequencies (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
26. I called another student (s) mean names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way (verbal bullying)	26 16.4 %	6 3.8 %	6 3.8 %	5 3.1 %	116 73.0 %
27. I kept him/her out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends, or completely ignored him/her. (indirect bullying)	12 7.5 %	1 0.6 %	3 1.9 %	3 1.9 %	140 88.1 %
28. I hit, kicked, pushed and shoved around him/her, or locked indoors him/her (physical bullying)	13 8.2 %	4 2.5 %	1 0.6 %	0 0 %	141 88.7 %
29. I spread false rumours about him/her and tried to make others dislike him/her (indirect bullying)	12 7.6 %	2 1.3 %	1 0.6 %	0 0 %	143 90.5 %
30. I took money or other things away from him/her or damaged his/her belongings (physical bullying)	3 1.9 %	1 0.6 %	0 0 %	3 1.9 %	152 95.6 %
31. I threatened or forced him/her to do things that he/she didn't want to (verbal bullying)	8 5.1 %	2 1.3 %	1 0.6 %	1 0.6 %	146 92.4 %
32. I bullied him/her with mean names or comments about his her race or colour (verbal bullying)	11 6.9 %	4 2.5 %	3 1.9 %	1 0.6 %	140 88.1 %
33. I bullied him/her with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning (verbal bullying)	17 10.7 %	0 0 %	3 1.9 %	2 1.3 %	137 86.2 %
34. I bullied him/her in any other way	14 8.8 %	3 1.9 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	142 89.3 %

**Note:** Column 1: Once or twice the last couple of months  
Column 2: Two or three times a month  
Column 3: Once a week  
Column 4: Many times a week  
Column 5: It hasn't happened the last couple of months

In addition, 62 children (38.5 %) reported that they had bullied others the last two months once or twice, two or three times a month, once a week or several times a week. The respective percentage of the bullies in the Bergen investigation was 15.1% (Olweus, 1993). Again, this percentage is lower than the percentage of the bullies in the investigation of the three schools in Nicosia.

**Table 4: Overall frequencies on being bullied or bullying others at school**

Items	Frequencies (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
5. How many times other children have bullied you the last couple of months	78 48.4 %	36 22.4 %	14 8.7 %	11 6.8 %	22 13.7 %
25. How many times have you bullied alone or with other children a child (or many children) in your school the last couple of months	99 61.5 %	36 22.4 %	17 10.6 %	7 4.3 %	2 1.2 %

**Note:** Column 1: It never happened to me / I never bullied anyone  
 Column 2: Once or twice the last couple of months  
 Column 3: Two or three times a month  
 Column 4: Once a week  
 Column 5: Many times a week

Generally in his report about the Bergen study Olweus (1993) reported whether the children were bullied or not or bullied others or not. Nevertheless, since no frequencies were reported by Olweus, a direct comparison of results could not be achieved. However, these results indicate that the perceptions of the 6<sup>th</sup> year pupils in the three schools selected during Stage 1.1 of this project agree with the teachers' perceptions that these schools have a high level of bullying.

### **1.3 The Olweus' list of bully characteristics**

The next step (Stage 1.3) was the identification of the bullies in each class of grade 6 in the three schools. This was done by means of the Olweus list of general characteristics of bullying and of the bullies (see Appendix 3, p.351)

provided to the teachers of each 6<sup>th</sup> class in the three schools including music, PE and Design and Technology teachers. In Primary 1 six teachers completed the Olweus list of criteria reporting the names of the pupils in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade that according to their opinion could be nominated as bullies. All the teachers reported the names of three boys that will be referred to as Pupil 1, Pupil 2 and Pupil 3 in this thesis. In Primary 2 fifteen teachers who taught in the three classes of 6<sup>th</sup> grade reported the names of the pupils that according to their perception could be nominated as bullies. These will be referred to as Pupil 4, Pupil 5 and Pupil 6 in this thesis. Pupils 4 and 6 were nominated as “bullies” by all the teachers that were teaching in their classroom. Pupil 5 was nominated as a bully by three out of five teachers that were teaching in his classroom. Finally, fourteen teachers that were teaching in all classes of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade in Primary 3 reported orally the names of the pupils in the three classes of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade that could be nominated as bullies, according to their perception. This resulted in three boys being identified as ‘bullies’. These will be referred to as Pupil 7, Pupil 8 and Pupil 9 in this thesis. Pupils 7 and 8 were mentioned by three out of five teachers as the bullies in their class. From the four teachers that were teaching in his classroom, Pupil 9 was reported as a bully only by his classroom teacher. However, he got the highest scores in the sociometric peer-rating technique that followed this stage in all the variables. This may be due to the fact that when the project was initiated Pupil 9 was punished for bullying other children during break time. This incident was very powerful for children and affected their life at school, although teachers did not seem to give much attention to it. Looking at the notes in my research journal it seemed that teachers in that school were not

very much aware of the bullying that was going on in the pupils' relationships.

Thus, they seemed to have different criteria about bullying and the bullies.

### **1.4 Sociometric Peer – rating technique**

The possibility of a different perception of the problem between the teachers and the pupils led to the employment of the sociometric peer-rating technique in order to find out the bullies in the 6<sup>th</sup> grades of the three schools, according to their peers' opinion (Stage 1.4).

Table 5 presents the average scores of the nine boys that were selected as case studies on the four variables of the sociometric technique. In each case, the sample boy had the highest score in his class on the four variables.

**Table 5: Mean scores of the nine boys in the four variables (scale 1-7)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Pupil 1</b>	<b>Pupil 2</b>	<b>Pupil 3</b>	<b>Pupil 4</b>	<b>Pupil 5</b>	<b>Pupil 6</b>	<b>Pupil 7</b>	<b>Pupil 8</b>	<b>Pupil 9</b>
Starts fights	5.84	5.64	6.48	6.52	4.42	5.57	3.24	4.91	4.64
Protests	5.60	5.08	5.44	4.80	4.94	4.10	4.64	5.45	4.84
Teases	5.87	5.44	5.84	5.90	5.45	4.73	3.24	5.00	3.76
Nobody likes him/her	3.28	3.68	6.12	4.47	5.31	4.94	2.76	3.29	4.48

This confirmed an agreement between the teachers' and the pupils' nominations referring the bullies in the three schools.

### **1.5 Interviews with the inspectors**

As it has been already mentioned, Phase 1 was constructed with a triangulation of the teachers', the pupils' and the inspectors' perceptions about bullying in the three schools. Thus, in the last stage (Stage 1.5) of Phase 1, interviews with the inspectors of the three schools were undertaken. The three inspectors could not

identify any bullies in the three schools and name them so they just gave general comments about bullying in schools. The three of them admitted that they were informed about incidents of bullying in the three schools by the teachers. As for the reasons that promote bullying behaviour in schools the three of them agreed that family conditions and television are the most important reasons for this phenomenon in schools.

Thus, Phase 1 ended with the selection of nine boys that could be considered as bullies in this study according to their teacher's and their peers' opinion. These boys will be also nominated as "the bullies" in this thesis.

## **2. Phase 2:**

Phase 2 aimed at the investigation of these case studies according to the Model of the Empirical Work (see Figure 2, p.86-87).

### **2.1 Semi-structured interviews with the bullies' parents and control parents**

The first Stage (Stage 2.1) of Phase 2 comprised a semi-structured interview with the bullies' parents. The results of the parents' interviews will be presented on the basis of The Model of Parents' perceptions about Bullying or the Bullies (see Figure 3, p. 108) and reference will also be made to the results of the interviews of the control parents.

### **2.1.1 The physiology of the parents**

A father asserted the thesis that his son's behaviour is due to the genes he had inherited from his mother. *"My wife's family are all very aggressive. So is my wife. My wife has a cousin who used to behave the same way as Andreas. Now he studies abroad and he is much calmer, so I am feeling better when I am feeling that Andreas will also calm."*

Moreover, one of the couples that participated in this project was carrier of Hepatitis B. In the interview his mother reported very emphatically that the only thing she was wishing for her son is to be healthy. She was afraid that one day her son would be seriously ill. According to the teacher, the whole family was already stigmatised in the community and the other parents did not let their children play with that boy. In addition, the father of the boy was alcoholic, according to the information given from the teacher and the boy. In this case, there are two physiological problems that are related to child's aggression: a sexually transmitted disease and alcoholism. Hepatitis B may not raise aggression per se, but it leads to social isolation, which could be seen as a factor that contributes to the development of bullying behaviour. Alcoholism also leads to parental aggression and domestic violence. In this case, it served as a model of aggressive behaviour for the boy.

From the group of control parents no physiological problems were reported.



### **2.1.2 Psychological factors**

Psychological factors are the second component of the model. This includes parental stereotypes, self-perception as a parent, defence mechanisms, stress and insecurities, parental expectations, relationship with their partner, relationship with the bully, and life satisfaction.

#### **a) Parental stereotypes**

Parental stereotypes may be the result of parental life experiences and may also be related to the way parents conceive life. Stereotypes may have to do with the way parents understand gender roles in a society in relation to the expression of aggressive behaviour. “*I explained to him*”, a mother said, “*that if he continues to behave badly, girls won’t want him.... girls don’t like aggressive boys*”. However, control parents did not report any stereotypes regarding the role of gender in relation to bullying or aggression.

A father believed that “*most youngsters just take advantage of their parents and use their money to enjoy their life. Army is the only pedagogic system that can be effective.*” His wife, whose father was also a senior army officer, supported her husband’s view. Their stereotypes about youngsters and their behaviour resulted from their experience as persons related to the army and this influenced their perception about their son and their relationship with him. The father could not really differentiate his two roles. This fact led them to see their boy only as a future soldier, neglecting his present needs for love and affection. Parents in the control group also expressed this stereotype about youngsters’ attitudes.

As far as the issue of punishment is concerned, a mother talking about her relationship with her parents replied: *“Of course they punished me. Is there a parent who doesn’t punish or even hit his child?”* In her statement punishment or even physical punishment is legitimated as part of “being a parent”. This mother also used physical punishment in her relationship with her son. In addition, another mother who works as a secondary school teacher, talking about her profession said that she would like to change *“the quality of the pupils we have at school”*. She thought *“most of the problems pupils present start from their home and especially from their relationship with their parents.”* Nevertheless, despite that she was imposing the responsibility for behavioural problems on the parents, she did not really seem to accept this stereotype for herself.

### **b) Parental self – perception**

Many parents talked about their selves as they see them in their relationship with their children. Their idea of themselves as parents may be the result of comparison with their partner or other parents or the way they perceived their status as a parent.

As a mother stated: *“Themistoklis is perfectionist. This has negative effects. He took that from me....and his hot temper is also something he got from me... I used to be very hot tempered....I was often getting very angry....I was always stressed and under pressure”* She said that with a sense of guilt. She actually felt that as a parent she had passed on aggression to her son, implying that as a parent she is responsible for her son’s hereditary characteristics.

In addition, parents seemed to see themselves as authority people in relation to their children. A father asserted in a loud and aggressive voice “ *I don’t have to punish them because when I am at home they don’t dare to do anything...* ”

However, when I asked him what he thinks his son thinks about him he replied, burst into laughing: “ *I don’t know...how should I know that?* ” He did not seem to think that his child could have an opinion about him. Interviewing this couple it was apparent that their attitude towards the child was not consistent. Their different perception about their relationship with the boy led to different ways of dealing with him.

Nevertheless, even if parental self-perception is characterised by consistency, it can lead to different reactions on behalf of the children. “ *Sometimes I think that I am the same mother and I am bringing them up in the same way but they are so different* ”, a mother claimed comparing the behaviour of her two sons. She was trying to accept the fact that each child is unique and different from others. Dealing with two different people in the same way may not be effective, as the impact of the mother’s actions can be differently interpreted by each one of them. On the other hand, accepting children’s differences and treating them in different ways may raise feelings of guilt. “ *Elyseus is not as good at school as Themistoklis and I sit with him and help him to study....maybe this is my fault...Themistoklis feels jealous about that....but I tried to explain to him that we have to help his brother* ”. In this case, feelings of guilt were due to the fact that the mother took the whole responsibility of how his son was feeling about his brother.

Talking about their self as parents some parents revealed a sense of competition between them that implied a problem in parental relationship. *“He believes that I can offer him more than his dad. Maybe because he spends more time with me....I realize that he thinks that I give him more than his dad”*, a mother said. Later, she disclosed her problematic relationship with her husband. She also seemed to base her self-perception as a parent only on the way her son saw her, which again connoted the inter-relationship between parental self-perception and perception about the child, in this case the bully.

The group of control parents did not present any signs of guilt in their relationship with their children. In addition, the way they were parenting their children was characterised by consistency. However, they perceived themselves as authority persons in their children's life. As most of them said: *“I have to be strict with him/her”*. According to them, being strict was a part of their role as a parent.

### **c) Defence mechanisms**

The most frequently employed defence mechanisms that came up in parent interviews were mainly denial in combination with rationalization and repression, displacement and in some cases projection. These defence mechanisms were employed either when the parents were referring to bullying or their personal life experience that has to do with the way they raise their children.

Trying to give an explanation about her son's bullying behaviour a mother claimed *“Two years ago he had to have an operation. They gave him more*

*anaesthetic than he really needed and because of this he has become very nervous. The doctors didn't tell us anything but we understand it ourselves."*

Again the physiology component was used in this case as a way to rationalise child's behaviour. Moreover, another mother said: "*My son has always been accused about everything bad that happened at school. I couldn't accept that for any reason.....it doesn't make sense....there are many children in the class...it can't always be my son...*" In those cases the mothers could not accept the fact that their children presented bullying behaviour and were accused about that and they were trying to rationalise the situation so as they would avoid feelings of guilt and rejection.

Rationalization could also be used to overcome feelings of guilt about using physical punishment. "*Yes, I may hit him...*", a mother said, "*I hit him slightly...I don't hit him a lot...but you can understand me...when you have to manage with five sons...*"

Denial was a mechanism employed by parents when they were asked whether they consulted a specialist about their son's problematic behaviour. It prevented the parents from admitting that their son has a problematic behaviour. As a mother said: "*You know, because all these things were very sad I want to repress them and forget about them*". Repression was employed here to enhance denial but it could also have to do with the relationship with the researcher and issues of confidentiality that came up very often throughout the course of this study.

Finally, projection was employed by parents to overcome their feelings of guilt in their relationship with their children or with their partner. The mother who was obsessed with cleanness and housework said that *“my mother made us like this...and that’s what I tried to pass on to my children.... but I think Themistoklis has an innate tendency to this obsession”*. By projecting her guilt of being obsessed to her mother and son, she could release her tension and sustain her positive self-esteem as a parent. In the same way a mother who seemed to neglect her son’s basic physical and emotional needs accused his son’s teacher of not giving attention to him in the classroom. *“My son wants to attract attention. His teacher didn’t give him any attention.... he admitted to me that he was very busy at that time...”* In this way, she could project his guilt for not fulfilling his son’s needs to the teacher. Later on, talking about his relationship with her partner, she projected her guilt for this separation to her son. *“My son was very unhappy when my partner left. But he also felt guilty. He realised that it was his fault that my partner left us....he had been very naughty....my partner used to live alone before he moved in with us and so he couldn’t accept his naughtiness...”* In addition, in her effort to rationalise the situation she strongly believed that her partner left because her son was untidy.

Control parents did not employ any defence mechanisms when talking about their children’s aggressive behaviour. They easily accepted the fact that their children can get angry, but since their actions when they get angry are not serious and harmful for other people they did not seek to deny them or rationalise them. They rather attributed their reactions to the forthcoming adolescence and regarded them as a part of their “growing up” stage. Moreover, none of the

control parents reported any referral to a specialist, since their children did not face any special behavioural or learning problems.

#### **d) Parental stress and insecurities**

Health problems and bad friends were the most frequently mentioned elements that enhanced parent's insecurities and raised their stress. The same elements were also argued by the control parents as the cause of their stress and insecurities. Parents who felt that they were undertaking the responsibility to finance the family reported that were afraid that one day they would get ill and they will not be able to work. Facing poverty as an everyday experience made this an issue of serious concern for them. Three parents, including the couple with Hepatitis B, reported that they were afraid of their children being ill one day. However, most of the parents claimed that what scares them more is the forthcoming adolescence. They seemed to identify this age with drugs, bad peers and car accidents. Each parent tried to pass on this message to their children in different ways.

*“ I don't want him to bring his friends at home. I don't trust them. They may steal our money or jewellery.....you can never know what will happen..... I can't let unknown children come in.”* Living in a refugee campus this mother did not seem to trust anyone. A father also reported that he would prefer to send his son to a private secondary school, despite the high expense, because he believed that there *“ he will be better controlled and he will not get into unknown situations like drugs and bad friends”*. He added very emphatically that it does not matter if his son learns nothing there as long as he can be better controlled and protected.

His insecurities, in this case seemed to affect not only the way he perceived his son but his perception about public education as well.

Finally, the army officer and his wife reported that since they were living in an area with many discos and night clubs, they were trying to pass on their fears to their son in order to be sure that he will not put him self in danger. “ *We tell him what to be aware of...we pass on to him our fear for huge motorbikes....so he doesn’t like them... he knows who to speak to and who can be his friend by listening to us and watching all these things on TV*”. However, they did not seem to be afraid only the external dangers but the way they were seeing their son, as well, since they did not seem to trust him. “ *I am afraid of the future....the way I see his character... I am afraid of the coming years.*”, his mother asserted very emphatically.

Parental fears and insecurities often led parents to seek for help from specialists. “ *We had problems with Spyros when he was younger. So we decided to go to a private school psychologist, after spending much money on special nursery schools. Spyros was very disappointed and we were fed up....we lost so much money and we felt that everybody was taking advantage of us. How can we help him? we can’t trust specialists anymore!*” This couple brought into the discussion the role of specialists in facing their child’s problems. Especially they asserted the issue of trust and honesty in their relationship with the specialist. The negative experiences they had in their interaction with them affected their perception about their child. They were confused, they did not know what to think about him. On the one hand they realised that he had problems and on the



other hand they did not want to accept this fact and tried to face it themselves. This confusion prevented them from trusting their son's abilities.

A mother living in a refugee campus also referred to the issue of special help. The first thing she told me as soon as I entered her house that afternoon was that she had a great problem with her son and he had been to a child psychologist. She believed that in the first years of primary school her son was coming home with bruises on his face. He was crying but never told her what was happening at school. That was the reason for taking him to a psychologist. *"I wanted her to see him more often, but she told me that she could only see him once a month....it was useless...from the time she saw him till the next time she would see him Sotiris changed a lot....besides I also needed some help..."* This mother was the only one who admitted that she wanted to see a specialist not only for her child but to support herself as well. She was not feeling secure herself as she was very stressed trying to handle her son alone.

Finally, only one mother whose son was adopted claimed that she and her husband saw a specialist after their son presented hyperactivity and resistance in the nursery and at home and she helped them to deal with the problem to some extent.

Parental stress and insecurities are also connected with parental expectations of their children, which is another component that influences parents' psychology and consequently parents' perceptions about the bully or bullying.

### **e) Parental expectations**

Most of the parents seemed to have academic expectations of their sons. They wanted them to have a successful career, especially the parents who lived in wealthy areas. The fact that all the parents, independently of their academic status, wanted their children to have private afternoon lessons in English, Computers, Music etc. indicates how important academic career is for them. Thus, their sons, as most of the children in Cyprus, spent their mornings at school and their afternoons in 1-3 private lessons and had very little time left to play and release their energy. Academic expectations were also expressed by the parents in the control group.

A mother who lived in the refugee campus expected her son to understand how she was feeling as a divorced wife and a single mother. *“I want my children to change”*, she said. *“I want them to be more cooperative and to understand me as I understand them....my partner left because they weren’t cooperative”*. By imposing her expectations on to her 12-year-old boy this mother was forcing him to think as an adult. Nevertheless, at that age his emotional and cognitive abilities could not enable him to completely understand his mother’s position. Thus, they were both led to frustration.

Generally, all the parents who participated in this study expected their children either to be different from what they were or to work hard in order to prepare a better future. Their expectations were based on their insecurities and in some cases on the order of children in the family. Parents seemed to have higher expectations of eldest children than from the younger. Parental expectations can

have a positive impact for children as they can motivate them to gain academic success. However, they can prompt children to be very competitive with each other, increase their aggressiveness, raise their stress and create problems in parent-children relationships. Parents who participated in this study mainly regarded their sons as future adults, neglecting their sons' personal experience of being a child in Cyprus.

#### **f) Parental relationships**

Parental relationships are a basic axis, which determines the way a family operates. However, it was not an easy issue to discuss with the parents, especially with the fathers. In addition, what really determines the way a family operates is not the relationship per se, that is to say whether the parents were living together or not, but the quality of their relationship. But how can we measure the quality of a relationship? This was actually a serious methodological problem in this study. Thus, in order to find some indications the parents were asked to disclose their perception about their partner and what they considered their child thought about their partner. They were also asked whether one of the parents had ever left home.

In the cases of the couples' interviews it was apparent how their relationship functioned. The army officer and his wife showed an absolute consistency in the way they were seeing life and worked together in facing their son's problem. They answered all the questions using "we..." and they even completed each others' sentences! Two fathers also reported an excellent relationship with their wives; although they acknowledged the fact that they are related to their sons in a

different way. So did the mother who works as a secondary school teacher, although she admitted that she wanted her husband to spend more time with her.

However, interviewing a couple in the refugee campus was not an easy task. Looking at the schools' archives and talking with the boy's teacher I had known that it was a case of domestic violence. Father's alcoholism and the fact that they were carriers of Hepatitis B prevented me from asking directly about their relationship. Nevertheless, the quality of their relationship was expressed in nonverbal ways throughout our meeting. The mother looked frightened and talked very little about her life in a very low voice. While her husband was talking about being a war prisoner she looked at him from time to time with admiration, but generally she avoided eye contact. She was looking on the ground and said that her husband knew more about the war than her. He seemed to enjoy that. Talking about her relationship with her father she said that he loved her a lot and he had never hit her. This was the first time she looked at him with hatred. He avoided seeing her, continued smoking but said nothing. When they were asked if one of them had ever left home, the father said very loudly: "*none ever left!*" and looked at her in a very aggressive way. She bowed her head again and said nothing. Every time I was asking her something personal or about her son she was looking at her husband waiting for him to answer and she always agreed with him. Even when I asked her age, she turned to her husband and waited for him to answer the question. Generally, this woman was "invisible" during the conversation. Whenever she talked her husband was looking straight at her.

The couple who lived in the refugee campus were not the only case of domestic violence in this project. Three other parents reported physical violence at home and one mother reported psychological and verbal violence. One of the parents who reported being physically abused was a divorced mother who also lived in the campus. The last time her husband abused her was in front of her son when the father had hit her son and she interfered to “save him”. She also reported that her husband used to leave home from time to time to have temporary relationships. Moreover, she did not seem to trust him. *“Last year he promised our children to spend Christmas with them but the last minute he decided to spend Christmas with his girlfriend. The children were very disappointed.”* She seemed very frustrated from the way her husband treated their children and she seemed to realise their frustration in relation to their father’s attitude.

The other mother who had reported physical, psychological and verbal violence was living in a very wealthy area. Her relationship with her husband went through a crisis three years ago and she left home with her children. Although she came back to her husband their children witnessed many incidents of verbal and psychological violence at home throughout that period of crisis. *“Themistoklis could understand everything”,* she said. *“My husband had hit me, but not in front of the children. They were just listening to our argument....”* In addition, this mother reported psychological violence on behalf of her husband. *“When I was telling him about our son’s aggressive behaviour he was blaming me. ‘It’s all your fault!’ he said. ‘You have the same character that’s why you are always fighting’. I was feeling so guilty....Later he had more time to spend with him and realised the problem. He was telling him off saying ‘Look, I am not*

*like your mother....you can handle her but not me....if I get angry with you...you will be miserable for many days...’ ”. The attribution of blame to the mother and the way her husband seemed to underestimate her role in relation to her child affected their relationship seriously. She did not seem sure anymore about her husband’s interest in her and looked very satisfied when her son tried to get attention from her. “When I wear something new my son always prompts his father to look at me. He says to him ‘ look dad, how beautiful mum is!’”.*

The other parent who reported physical violence was the father from Georgia. He and his spouse did not seem to have the same perception about their way of life. *“We live together but we always had problems [....]I tried everything with my wife...but finally I had to hit her...it was the only way to get her understand....I couldn’t find any other ways...[...] lately I have stopped hitting her because I don’t want my son to do the same when he gets married...but in the past I used to hit her a lot.”* This father described his wife as a very manipulative person. However, he admitted that this attitude was not a good paradigm for his son.

Finally, a mother comparing herself with her husband, expressed feelings of inferiority. *“He is always the good one...he can better take care of the boys”*. She was feeling incapable of dealing with her sons and she admitted that when they are very naughty she says to them that she will tell their father when he will come home and this is the most effective way to deal with them. She perceived her husband as more capable and more effective as a parent than her and she had an idea that he and his sons were excluding her from their “team”.

Parents in the control group did not report any problems in their relationship with their partner. They rather stressed the importance of consistency in their relationship regarding the way they raise their children.

In conclusion, it seems that physical and psychological violence can exist in a family independently of their social or financial status. Furthermore, the couple living in the campus and two mothers, who were physically abused by their husbands, used physical punishment with their children. One common problem that was reported by most women in this study was the fact that they were feeling neglected as spouses and wanted their husband to spend more time with them. Moreover, it was apparent that even if parental relations are excellent bullying behaviour could still occur in children. Finally, parental relations were strongly related to the relationship of the parents with the bully which is the second important axis on which a family system is developed.

### **g) Parental relationships with the bully**

The relationship of the parents with the bullies, seemed in many cases to be influenced by parental relationships and, according to the parents replies, were characterised by rejection, neglect, dependence, fear and aggression. Only two of the parents reported that their relationship with their children was harmonious, despite difficulties.

Lazarus's mother appeared to experience rejection in her relationship with her son. *"He never searches for me when I am out. He wants to be with his father rather than with me. When his father is late at night, he always asks me what*

*time his father will be back home....he is searching him more than me...*” His father also bathes him and it seems that the rejection of mother passed on from parental relationship to the relationship with the bully. This woman was feeling as the “odd one out” in her family and this affected her relationship with her son, as he had chosen to be closer to his father than to her.

On the contrary, according to another father, his wife systematically rejects his son. *“When he tries to talk to her about his achievements she sends him away by saying ‘I don’t care’”*. His son is afraid of his mum and so the father feels closer to him *“When I am away she is searching for me and calls me many times in my mobile phone”*, the father reported. When they spend time together they go to the Luna Park, work together or the father teaches him wrestling. This strong relationship between father and son, enhanced by mothers’ rejection, may have led the bully to model his father’s aggressive behaviour.

In the case of Pupil 2, the father was rejected by the son and the rest of the family. Again the rejection was passed from the relationship of the mother with her ex-husband to the relationship of the father with the bully. While Sotiris was in hospital his father never visited him and when I met him in their home after Sotiris’s operation, his father tried to kiss him, but Sotiris turned his face away. Rejection towards his father was also enhanced by the repeated frustrations the bully was experiencing in his relationship with his father. The night I visited his mother for the interview Sotiris came home from his private lesson and called his dad because they agreed to stay together that night. Sotiris was very anxious because he was not sure if his father would come and pick him up. However, he



prepared his bag with his clothes and waited for him. The next morning he told me that his father did not come to pick him up. That morning he hit two children before the lessons began.

Sotiris, tried to have a closer relationship with his mother, after rejecting his father. However, his mother seemed to neglect his needs. As the teacher reported Sotiris told her that his mum does not cook for them, so he sometimes eats in neighbours' homes. In addition, when he entered the hospital for the operation, his mother left him alone the previous night despite the fact that the doctor told her that the situation was urgent and Sotiris was very stressed and frightened. She went back to the hospital next morning after the operation had finished and Sotiris was back to the ward. Nevertheless, despite his mum's attitude, Sotiris always searches for her when she is away. He even wants to sleep with her at night. *"He feels secure when he sleeps with me and when my boyfriend left...he wanted to sleep with me so as I wouldn't feel alone"*, mother claimed with obvious satisfaction. There seems to be a mutual dependence in the relationship between mother and son in order to overcome their frustrations.

Mutual dependence was reported in the interview with Pupils 7's mother. After the crisis in parental relationship, Themistoklis wanted to sleep with his mum. *"I told him that he has grown up now and he can't sleep with me anymore....he says that he wants to come to my bed and watch TV but I think he is afraid....he has phobias..."*. Themistoklis, according to his mother, respects and holds his father in esteem but he is also very much afraid of him. This fact led him to a closer relationship with his mother, especially during the crisis. *"He was stuck on me."*, his mother claimed. *"He couldn't loose me from his side....he was asking me*

*continually 'what are we going to do mum?' [...] He is introvert...he doesn't ask much. I told him that mum and dad had an argument and we'll stay with grandma until I'll see what we can do. 'Mum, please I don't want you to split....can't you find a way to be together again?', he said. I told him that dad was wrong and I couldn't always resign. 'What did he do to you?', he asked and we had a whole conversation about the way my husband treated me". It seemed that from that day Themistoklis wants his mum to assure him that things were OK. However, in this close relationship he never expressed his feelings concerning the crisis and his parents' relationship. This close mother-son relationship is also reinforced by the fact that he does not see his father a lot and that his mother derives much satisfaction from her son's attention. It seems that her son's attention substitutes her husband's attention.*

Furthermore, in the interview of the couple who lived in the refugee campus, a close relationship between mother and the bully was also apparent. According to the mother's reply: *"Marinos, is afraid of his father [...] he is most afraid of his father rather than me [...] he may hit him rarely but it is enough to look at him [...] all of them are afraid of him when he calls them....every time he calls 'Marinos' he has to come right here immediately [...] when they see him coming from work they ran immediately at home".* She was saying that looking frightened herself. Her husband agreed with her smiling with pride about himself.

Pupil 8's father appeared to be in a competitive relationship with his son. He wants him to undertake as many responsibilities he can stand up to. *"My son gets angry with me but I also get angry with him. [...] I think he wants to overpower*

*me....he can get on well with me but he wants to play it tough.....I may say something and he will resist".* He never asks for them when they are out and generally he seems very independent in his relation with his parents. However, his father said that *"he wants my cuddle but if I try to show him affection he plays it tough. He is still a baby...."*

The army officer and his wife claimed that Spyros could be in the same age as their grand children but they did not think that he competes with them. *"He is our priority"*, they reported emphatically. They spend much time with him mainly helping him with his homework and watching TV. *"I tried to discuss some issues with him about school, because he had some problems with other children at school....he always closes the discussion....he doesn't talk to us about his problems..."*. They also talk to him about their worries and fears. Thus, when they are away Spyros calls them many times to say : *'You are late and I worry a lot about you '*. *"He is afraid not to lose us"*, his father claimed.

Finally, two parents asserted the thesis that their relationship with their children was excellent despite the fact that their children presented bullying behaviour. These parents also reported excellent relationships with their partners.

Stelios's mother described a relationship with her adopted son based on mutual and genuine communication. *"We tell him everything he wants to know about his past....he has the right to know"*. They spend much time with him doing their homework and his father takes him with him in his office. This boy misses his parents when they are away and calls them "a million times" before they are back.

On the contrary, Andreas is very independent. He never searches for them when they are out. According to his father, "*He doesn't fear either his dad or his mum, but he pays more attention to his dad*". His parents spent their afternoons and weekends with him and he usually works with his father in the garden or goes to a basketball matches together. His parents adore him and take a good care of him.

The parents in the control group reported very positive relationships with their children. They seem to spend time with them, take care of them, enhance their independence and give them the right to choose what they want to do.

In conclusion, parental relationships with the bully vary according to the parent's psychology and the child's uniqueness. Even if the parents-child relationship is excellent bullying behaviour can still occur at home. However, it seemed that the parent-child relationship affects parent's perceptions about the bully and the level of life satisfaction each of the parents is experiencing.

#### **h) Parental life satisfaction**

Five of the parents and a couple reported that they were very satisfied with their life and that they would not wish for any changes. The same opinion was expressed by the parents in the control group.

However, two parents and a couple, not included in the control group, asserted that they did not find any satisfaction in the way they were living. All of them were living in the refugee campus. When they were asked whether they were

satisfied with their life, they were very assertive and direct in the way they answered, “*No, I am not*”. They all related their attitude to their son’s behaviour. To the question: “What would you like to change”, the two mothers replied: “*My children....I want my children to change...*”. Only the mother who was abused by her husband said in a low and frightened voice showing around with a gesture of despair: “*To change what? ....with five sons... [...] we all try hard... but what can be changed?*”, she was asking me directly waiting for an answer, looking at me straight in the eyes in a miserable way.

It seemed that the way of living in the campus affected the level of life satisfaction for the parents living there, as well as their attitude towards their sons’ behaviour.

Generally, browsing through the components of the psychology of the parents, as they were presented on the basis of this model, it becomes apparent that their function is overlapping. Thus, it was difficult to talk about them in complete separation from each other. There are two main reasons that led to this difficulty, first that each parent as a person, functions in a holistic way, bringing all these components together within the limits of their personality. Second, a family system is based on the interactive relationship of its members, that is to say that each of them is bringing all these factors in their relationship with the other members contributing in this way to the development of a unique family system. In addition, parental personality can be affected by a number of factors that exist in the external milieu and are strongly related to its formation and especially to

the formation of parents' perceptions about the bully or bullying. These will be regarded as the social factors and it is to their investigation that I will now turn.

### **2.1.3 Social factors**

According to the model the social factors that could affect parental perceptions about the bully or bullying could be the following: financial conditions, work conditions, relationship with school – communication with classroom teacher, relationship with the community and sibling relationships.

#### **a) Financial Conditions**

Financial conditions were determined in parents' interviews by the conditions of housing, holidays, the existence of a foreign maid and children's relationship with her.

Sotiris's mother and the couple who lived in the campus reported that their houses were state houses. They did not pay any rent. Sotiris had only one sister so he could have his own room. However, the couple had five boys and they all had to live in a three bedroom very small flat. So Marinos was still sleeping in his parents' room or sometimes on the sofa. As his mother said they never can have lunch together because the kitchen is very small and there is not enough space for all of them. In addition, those flats do not have a yard so if the children want to play they have to play in the streets. Thus, all the parents who live in the campus reported that their children were hit by cars when they were younger. Lazarus's mother reported that their home was privately owned and situated just outside the campus. Her brothers had built the house for her when she was about

to get married. She said that very emphatically in order to stress that she is not “a campus person”. Nevertheless, since she had four children, Lazarus’s had to share his bedroom with his brother.

The other parents who lived in wealthy areas had their privately owned houses with big yards and 3-4 bedrooms so their children could have their own space at home. Two of them also have a second home near the beach where they spend some time throughout the year.

As for their holidays, these parents reported that they spend some weeks abroad during summer, whereas, the parents who live in the campus said that they go for one day trips within Cyprus.

Two of the parents who live in wealthy areas declared that they have a foreign maid at home. One of the parents also reported that they used to hire a foreign babysitter until their children went to nursery school. However, both of them clarified that the relationship of the foreign maid with their children was strictly professional. *“Her job is to clean the house...the children accept her but we don’t leave them with her when we go out....we don’t want them to think that she can substitute their mother....”*, a father replied.

Apparently, this study suggested that parents in the refugee campus were much more financially deprived than the rest of the parents who participated in this study and this fact had to do also with their work conditions.

However, parents in the control group did not report any financial problems, even if they were living in the campus. All of them had their jobs and were satisfied with their income.

### **b) Work conditions**

In six cases both parents had a job and they reported that they were satisfied with what they were doing. Two fathers worked in private companies as accountants or managers. Two fathers owned their own business. One was a senior army officer, one was a builder and one was a lorry driver. Two of the fathers were unemployed.

Most mothers were working till noon and they spent the afternoons with their children, whereas their husbands worked more hours. Two mothers were housewives. Three mothers worked in government departments, one was a teacher, one was a house maid, one was selling jewellery and one worked as a messenger in a medical centre. The latest had to work in the afternoons as well and on Saturday mornings. She lives in the campus and she is a single mother. *“My ex-husband gives us nothing as he is unemployed”, she claimed. “I never got any help from the Department of social services, although I made so many efforts.... they were always very negative .....always ....they know that my salary is 380 pounds per month...how could I live with two children, a house to take care of and pay the debts?”*

Moreover, the couple who lived in the campus with five boys were both unemployed. The father did not seem comfortable to disclose this information.



*“Look, I used to work as a painter but now there aren’t any jobs....I’m dealing with potatoes”, he said. “I don’t have a fixed timetable....it depends on the work. I can go any time I like...”. However, his wife added that “now he doesn’t go anywhere”.*

Browsing through the schools’ documents I found out that this couple were getting financial support from the Department of Social Services for many years. Their son as well as the rest of the children living in the campus also got financial support from the school.

The parents who worked claimed that they are generally satisfied with what they were doing and they did not want to change anything in their job. They also did not report any professional stress, except the mother who works as a teacher.

Parents in the control group were very satisfied with what they were doing. Even mothers who chose not to work reported that they made this decision in order to spend more time with their children. Thus, they were happy to have a closer relationship with their children.

The parent’s work conditions were another practical problem in the course of this study, as for some of them it was very difficult to leave their place of work and meet me for the interview. This problem also affected their relationship with the school teacher since some parents could hardly find time to meet them in the morning. However, parents’ relationship with the school is another factor that influences parents perceptions about the bully or bullying.

### **c) Parents' relationship with the school**

Parents' relationship with the school and especially the school teacher is very important in facing bullying in schools as they can both get from each other the information they need to get a holistic picture of the bully's life. In addition, parents and teachers are the main "significant adults" in a child's life.

Four of the parents reported that they come to school when they call them from school. Three of them claimed that they very rarely go to school. *"It is usually my wife who talks with his teacher"*, a father said, because according to him *"there aren't any problems with Tassos at school"*. Besides, the mother of the adopted boy who is also a teacher asserted that her husband is a member of the schools' parent's association and he goes to school more often.

A couple and two parents declared that they often come to school and they referred to their son's teacher to ask for advice and assistance. Furthermore, not only this couple but all the parents had a very positive idea about their children's teachers. *"We are very lucky"*, the army officer and his wife added, *"we have a very good teacher this year...she is very devoted and she is an exception..."*. Parents who live in the refugee campus also asserted a very good perception about their son's teacher. *"Elpida loves my son"*, said Marinos' mother. *Elpida informs me very well. She often calls me if there is a problem"*, another mother claimed. Finally, Sotiris's mother believed that this year did not have any difficulties at school because Sotiris's teacher is better than last year, although the teacher they got last year spend much time with Sotiris even in the afternoons. *"He used to call me all the time and talk to me about Sotiris. This*

*year they haven't called me yet so I didn't go to school.....I can't leave my work to go to school and talk with the teachers....however, I can know what is going on, how Sotiris reacts etc."* she said adding once more that her son wants to attract attention. This was something she seemed to expect from his son's teachers.

All the parents reported that when they meet their son's teachers they talk to them about their attendance and behaviour. The same issues were mentioned by the control parents who, in addition, stated that their relationship with their child's classroom teacher was excellent and based on mutual trust.

#### **d) Parents' relationship with the community**

Parents' relationship with the community concerns the way they perceive themselves and their children as members of the community and consequently to their children's socialization.

Sotiris's mother saw herself as an unwelcome person in her neighbourhood. She experienced rejection and hatred from her neighbours. The father who came from Russia realised that his son had problems in getting socialised with other children in Cyprus. "*We have problems with other children in our neighbourhood*", he claimed. He really worried about his son's sociability and he admitted that he tried to help him mingle with other children by changing his surname. Finally, the army officer and his wife were very negative about the quality of life in their neighbourhood. "*We don't trust this place*", they asserted.

Parents in the control group reported excellent relationships with the members of their community, except from the parents who lived in the campus. These parents may not report any personal problems in their relationships in the community but said very emphatically that they do not trust the people in the campus and that they would prefer their children to make friends somewhere else.

The relationship of the parents with their community seems to influence their child's perception about and position in the community. However, there are other factors within the family that may substitute community relationships.

#### **e) Sibling relationships**

Sibling relationships, as they were described by the parents in this project, differed according to the age difference, the number of the children in the family and the order of the children. In addition, the way the bullies perceived their parents' relationship with them and their siblings seemed to play a role. Most of the parents appeared to base their idea of siblings' relationship on comparison between their children.

When the interviews took place Marino's eldest brother was just assigned in the army. This fact affected family relationships and especially Marinos and his mother. They were very sad. Marino's teacher had disclosed to me that his eldest brother was modelling father's behaviour more than anybody else. He was hitting his younger siblings when his father was not at home to hit them. This fact was confirmed by their mother. *"Although he was hitting them when they were naughty, when he left for the army Marinos was deeply hurt [...] and the rest of*

*the children were hurt but not as much as Marinos*". As soon as their eldest brother left things changed. *"They are more calm"*, their mother said. *"They don't fight as they did in the past"*.

When Spyros was born, according to his parents, he was very much welcomed by his sisters despite their age difference. However, as Spyros was growing up he confused the roles and did not seem sure about who his mum was! This idea was also confirmed by the fact that Spyros feels comfortable to talk about his life to his sister, whereas he never talks to his parents. When he had problems with a boy at school he talked about them with his sister. *"He burst out and told her that that boy had destroyed his life"*, father said. But when his mother asks him if he has any problems at school he always replies: *"Everything is ok mum"*.

In addition, as soon as Stelios was adopted his mother got pregnant. When his sister was born he was very happy and he liked the fact that another child would come in the family. However, it was the first time since his adoption that he had to be separated from his mother. *"He was feeling rejected and neglected...so when we came home he told me that he wanted to throw the baby in the dust pin....but later he was very happy with her"*. The boy seemed to overcome his negative feelings and to have a closer relationship with his sister.

Three of the boys seemed to experience jealousy in their relationships with their siblings, according to their parents. Their feelings resulted from the way they perceived their parents' relationship towards them and their siblings. *"He gets angry when he realises that I give more money to his sister"*, Dimitris's father said.

Themistoklis, according to his mum, wants everything his brother has. *“His brother is not as a good pupil as Themistoklis, so I sit near him when he is doing his homework and try to help him. Themistoklis then becomes very jealous”*, she said.

Another boy became aggressive as soon as his youngest sister was born but his father believed that as he is growing up things are getting worse, especially the last 4 years. Tassos used to sleep in his parents' bed until his sister was born. When his sister was a baby he was very jealous of her. *“He wanted to sleep with us because the baby was sleeping with us”*. The last 4 years Tassos stopped sleeping with his parents but he had become more aggressive with his sister.

Moreover, one of the boys gets angry with his twin brother very often because he does not want to let him use the computer or because they want the same piece of cake. According to their father *“Andreas doesn't want to do his homework and he tries to manipulate his brother to let him copy it from him....his brother realises this and gets very angry....so they fight....he also fights with his sister”*.

Nevertheless, parents in the control group did not report any serious problems in their child's relationship with their siblings. Three of them mentioned some minor incidents of aggression between them but stressed that these happened very rarely without the intention to harm each other.

In conclusion, sibling relationships may result from the way parents treat their children but they also affect the way they perceive their children's bullying behaviour. Moreover, children's relationships with their grandparents are also important in the way parents perceive bullies as their parents' idea about their children is also important to them. For example, throughout their interview, Marinos' parents often referred to his relation with his grandparents in order to stress how much they love him and to report that every time he feels angry he leaves home and goes to them to talk things out. However, this is a factor that concerns parents' personal history which is the fourth basic component that affects parents' perceptions about the bully or bullying according to the model.

#### **2.1.4 Parental personal history**

Parental personal history can play a crucial role in the development of parents' perception about the bully or bullying. What a parent brings as a perception in the case of bullying contains an account of their personal past experience. In this section I am going to refer to parents' personal history in relation to four main elements: their childhood years, experiences from war or unfavourable political situations, their relationship with their parents and their education. In addition I will refer to the life history of particular parents in which the sequence of events could influence the way parents' perceive their life.

##### **a) Parents' childhood years**

All of the parents reported that they had happy childhood years despite the difficulties in their life. Most of the difficulties reported by the parents were due to the war in 1974, as most of them were teenagers at that time.

A mother who used to live in the occupied area with her mother and sisters declared that the fact that their father was away as a war prisoner and their uncle was missing affected their childhood. *“My mother was very stressed and anxious since my father was a war prisoner for 3 months. Of course the rest of the family stood by us but the times were very difficult [...] we were so afraid....especially my mother who was left alone with three girls. At that time Turkish soldiers had raped some girls and we were all so frightened....my mother was dressing us with my grandmothers’ clothes to look older....we were hearing rumours that the army was coming towards our village and we were afraid to get out of the house. We didn’t know what would happen the next day and we didn’t know what had happened to our father. Three days after we heard from the radio that he was a war prisoner and was coming back from Turkey. The next day we left for the free part”*. These experiences and especially maternal insecurity followed her throughout her life, influenced her relationship with her mother and increased her stress as a parent.

The father living in the campus reported that he had been abused during the period that he was living in the occupied area. *“We were wandering in the mountains to collect mushrooms and birds to eat and we were finding guns hidden in the bushes [...] one of the villagers sold out the incident in the Turkish army officer and they arrested us. We were four youngsters. They didn’t just hit us....they hit us a lot...then I was taken to Kerineia castle and then to the prison in Agios Amvrosios. Nobody knew about my arrest and nobody knew where we were taken...not even the UN or the Red Cross [...] we were in prison for almost a month until the Red Cross discovered us....after this adventure the incidents*



*started in our village....every time something happened and the army didn't like it they arrested me and my friend...they were hitting us a lot..."*

Nevertheless, three parents claimed that the war was the most shocking experience they ever had but they did not mention any negative consequences from war in their personal life.

Finally, the father from Russia claimed that during Communism he was abused as a soldier in Russia. *"I went to the army in Siberia. It was very hard there. The senior officer was abusing us. He was a stupid man who used violence instead of his mind to control us."*

Parents in the control group also claimed that they had happy childhood years and that the experience of war was the most traumatic they had at that time.

### **b) Parents' relationship with their parents**

This element was considered as important since it can give an indication of the bully's relation with their grandparents as well as the transgenerational character of violence in a family.

Surprisingly, all of the parents reported an excellent relationship with their parents despite the fact that their parents were very strict. Four of them reported that their parents used physical punishment with them. As the army officer claimed: *"When they hit us we knew why they did it"* and as a mother from the campus said: *"Yes they hit me, is there a parent who doesn't hit their child?"*

The father who lived in the campus and was also abused as a war prisoner reported physical violence in his relationship with his parents. *“Both of them used the ‘holly stick’”*, said to me laughing. However, his son (the bully) seemed to have a very close relationship with them. *“When he gets angry he goes to his grand parents who live next to us and tells them his complaints”*, his mother said.

Six of the parents declared excellent relationships with their parents without physical punishment. Nevertheless, two mothers clarified that they had closer relationships with their fathers rather than their mothers.

Parents in the control group also reported excellent relationships with their parents but they also stressed how strict their parents were, especially with girls.

### **c) Parents’ education**

Talking about their school years parents revealed their relationship with their teachers and as a consequence their perception about schools and teachers nowadays. Five parents were primary school graduates and these were the parents living in the refugee campus and the father from Russia. A mother was a secondary school graduate and five parents did graduate and post graduate studies. All of them asserted the thesis that their school years were very happy.

Nevertheless, six of the parents reported being physically punished by their teachers and all of them believed that their teachers were very strict. Some of them even legitimated their teachers’ tendency to use physical punishment.

Parents' educational history affected their relationship with the school and their perception about teachers' effectiveness nowadays. All the parents who participated in this study, although they reported that they had experienced physical punishment when they were pupils, did not accept any teacher imposing physical punishment on their child, even if he presented bullying behaviour at school.

Moreover, parents in the control group also asserted that they enjoyed their years at school but they still remember how strict their teachers were. However, they did not seem to relate their personal experience with their relationship with their child's teacher.

#### **2.1.5 Bully's actions at home**

The investigation of this component was focused on three main questions: when do these children get angry, towards whom do they direct their anger, how do they express their anger and try to handle it.

All of the parents who participated in this study reported that they face problems at home due to their sons' bullying behaviour. However, they gave different reasons that led to their children's aggressive behaviour. A parent said that his son gets angry at home because he does not accept others to tell him he is wrong. Sotiris's mother claimed later in this interview, that his son wants to attract attention. The father from Russia claimed that his son pushes his sister when he realises that she is given more money than him. His son thinks that money is a reward for her achievements. Moreover, another father said that his son gets

angry when his brother does not resign to his manipulations. The couple living in the campus asserted that their son gets angry when his brothers tease him or hit him. The army officer and his wife believed that their son gets angry when he feels people are unfair to him. Themistoklis's mother said that his son gets angry with whatever has to do with his brother, as he feels jealous of him. The mother of the boy who was adopted reported that her son *"is a petty tyrant....when he can't have what he wants to have.....as he wants to have everything under control at home"*. Finally, a mother living in the campus said that his son simply does not obey her because he does not like her.

Seven out of the nine children were reported by their parents to direct their aggression to their siblings. It was also apparent that their aggression was related to their siblings' presence at home. As a parent said: *"When his sister is not at home he is very different"*. Only the parent from Russia reported that his son's anger is not only directed to his sister but to his mother as well. In addition, the army officer and his wife, as well as a mother living in the campus, said that their sons directed their anger towards them. Finally, the mother of the adopted boy claimed that her son's anger is usually directed towards everyone at home.

According to the parents, these boys expressed their anger in many different ways. Five parents reported that their son presents physical and verbal bullying at home. The couple living in the campus said that their son expressed his anger only physically and the army officer and his wife said that their son *"raises his voice but then he becomes introvert and cries a lot"*. Two mothers who were also living in the campus said that their children, except from being physically

and verbally aggressive, they did not obey them when they get angry. This could be regarded as a form of psychological bullying as in this way the boys tried to lead their parents to frustration.

Finally, most of the parents did not seem to be aware of the ways their son's dealt with their aggression. Only the couple in the campus reported that every time their son gets angry he leaves home, goes on his grandparents' place and stays there until he relaxes.

In the parents' control group nobody reported serious actions of bullying from their children. Some of them admitted that their children can get very angry and direct their anger towards objects. They may also withdraw or refuse to do something e.g. to eat. However, the expression of their anger does not imply an intention to harm someone. It is just a reaction to defuse tension.

#### **2.1.6 Parents' perceptions of the bullies**

All the factors mentioned above are components of parental perceptions about bullies. However, parental perceptions, as they were manifested by the parents who participated in this study, also have an interest per se, since, according to the teachers, they are always asserted by the parents in their communication with the school in order to deal the problem at school. In this way, parents bring into the discussion their own "truth" in relation to their son's behaviour that undoubtedly has to be taken seriously into consideration.

Only one mother said that her child is “a difficult child” and that she did not know what to do with him. This mother was experiencing rejection on behalf of his son. She was in despair. *“I have so many problems with him”,* she said.

The rest of the parents appeared to have a very positive idea about their sons but they asserted many times throughout the interviews that they faced a big problem with their behaviour at home. Most of them tried to find an explanation for this behaviour. *“He does things in a hurry....he doesn’t think before acting....[....] he resists to my wife. He says ‘no’ and he doesn’t change his mind because he is like her. They have the same character.”*

*“I think he is a good character except from the fact that he gets angry very easily”,* another father said. *“ [...] my wife thinks the same way as me. Tassos is mature and extrovert. She tries to advice him regarding his anger [...] he always wants to be the winner.”*

This explanation was also given by the father who said that when his son was younger he let him win in chess or football because he could not stand seeing him being disappointed. *“We came to a point when he couldn’t accept a failure”.* However, he asserted the idea that although in the past his son always wanted to be the winner, now he does not seem very confident. In addition, this father gave his perception about his son as a member of a peer group. *“He is hot tempered even with his peers. Sometimes when I come to school to pick him up, I secretly watch him playing football and I realise that he gets angry very easily. He can’t*

*handle others in a way that he will pass his idea without letting them become angry”.*

Three parents also asserted the issue of confidence in their sons. They believed that their sons were not confident enough. The army officer and his wife also believed that their son *“is a very good child but has no self confidence”*. The mother whose son was adopted stated that her son is selfish and from the very first time they got him with them he wanted to control everything and overpower others. *“He is a leader but he is a bit reserved so this is not very obvious at school”*, she said. Nevertheless, by the end of the interview she said: *“he is not a difficult child. He has many good elements in his character....he needs patience....he is very sociable...he makes friends with people older than him...”*

Finally, three parents living in the campus mentioned that their children are very good children but they just get angry very easily. *“My son just wants to attract others’ attention.... that’s all. I don’t know why he feels like that”*, a mother said. Furthermore, the couple agreed that their son is a good child *“he is very willing.... very proud....he always helps me at home.....he takes out rubbish or goes to the grocers to fetch me what I need.....it’s only the fact that he gets angry.....that’s all we don’t have any other problems with him”*, they said.

The same positive perception about their children was expressed by the parents in the control group. They all regarded their children as mature, honest and some of them as spoiled.

In conclusion, parents appeared to have a twofold perception about the bullies and about bullying. They did not seem to identify their sons with their behaviour. They referred to their behaviour as a problem they have to face but they talked about their sons in a positive way. Some of them became very emotional during the interview. They seemed to suffer because of their sons' problematic behaviour and were desperately asking for help. Since some parents felt that nobody could really help them with that they tried to handle the problem themselves. This fact led to the investigation of the parents' actions as a reaction to their sons' behaviour.

### **2.1.7 Parental actions**

Parents tried to face their son's bullying behaviour at home in three ways either by punishment or by advising them through discussion or by a combination of both. In addition, the parents who participated in this study used three forms of punishment: physical punishment, psychological punishment by means of deprivation or detection and threat.

Threat was most used by two fathers through eye conduct and body posture. *"It's enough for me to stare at them..."* the father living in the campus said. Two of the mothers and a father reported that they used physical punishment. The father and one of the mothers living in the campus also reported that their parents used physical punishment with them. Moreover, the third mother who lived in the campus did not refer to punishment at all, although her son's teacher had stated that the boy had told her that his mother had hit him many times. This mother also claimed that his father was hitting her when she was living with him. The



last two mothers did not seem to have a close relationship with their children either.

The more educated the parents were the less they used physical punishment. Two fathers used psychological punishment in the form of deprivation and detection. One of them, however, mentioned that he is not consistent. The other one said that he tried to punish his son by not allowing him to go shopping with him, but since he did not see any result, he decided to discuss things with him and to advise him. Moreover, a mother who seemed to use a combination of physical and psychological punishment reported that after using those two without result she decided to talk things out with him.

Two of the parents, the father from Russia and the mother of the adopted child, reported that they only use discussion with their children. Finally, the army officer and his wife claimed that they use deprivation of computer games, because their son became addicted and spent most of his time at home in front of the computer. However, since there is not any other way to entertain him self they often compromise.

Parental actions are the result of parental perceptions about bullying and a reaction to the bully's behaviour at home. However, consistency in the way parents deal with their son's behaviour is very important regarding their effectiveness. Consistency also has to do with the model of parental behaviour at home. If a child is frequently the witness of domestic violence, then he experiences punishment as another form of violence. In this sense violence

reinforces violence and the situation becomes a vicious cycle. In addition, in order to be effective punishment has to be employed within a framework of a relationship between parents and children. If this relationship is not strong enough or does not exist punishment has no meaning for children.

From the parents in the control group only one reported that she uses physical punishment, rather than advice and discussion, but very rarely. The rest of the parents mostly use advice, discussion and deprivation to discipline their children.

Moreover, in terms of school intervention to this problem, the way parents face bullying at home has to be communicated and discussed with the boy's teacher. In this way, they can act consistently so that the bully will not get mixed messages about his attitude.

For this reason an investigation of the teachers' perspectives about the bullies or bullying would be necessary within the course of this study. This was done according to The Model of Teachers' perceptions about Bullying or Bullies (see Figure 4, p. 111).

## **2.2 Semi-structured interviews with the bullies' teachers**

### **2.2.1 Factors that affect the physiological state of the teachers**

The four main factors investigated in this element were general health, smoking, eating habits, and heat. These were regarded as potential stressors for teachers.

Only one teacher reported having a physical health problem, called myasthenia gravis leading to gradual paralysis. Two teachers claimed that they smoke 15-20

cigarettes at school but they did not relate this habit with their general attitude at school. In addition, teachers appeared to have very poor eating habits and all of them reported that they drink 2-3 coffees a day at school because they help them manage their stress. Finally, heat was also reported by the teachers as a factor affecting their physiology as it leads to the increase of their tension and tiredness at school.

However, despite the fact that all the teachers acknowledged that these factors are related to their stress, they did not relate them to the way they were dealing with the bullies or bullying in their schools.

### **2.2.2 The psychology of the teachers**

The teachers' psychological input will be examined in this study in terms of self-perception, job satisfaction, defence mechanisms, stress and stereotypes.

#### **a) Teachers' self perception**

Only one of the teachers asserted her self-perception by talking about her self as an individual in separation from her perception about herself as a teacher. The other teachers talked about themselves only as teachers. Thus, the teachers' self-perception was seen in two different respects in this study.

#### **Teachers' self-perception as individuals**

The teacher who asserted her self-perception as an individual by talking about herself was the one working in the campus. She emphatically stated that she was

seeing herself as “an open person”. Her self-perception was affected by her relationship with the bullies in her class. Talking about the way these children express their emotional needs, she supported this idea by stating that she believed that body touch is very important in human communication. *“If you see Sotiris giving me a cuddle you will understand how satisfied he is....he sends a message that ‘I gave a cuddle to the teacher’ [...] he can acknowledge his emotional needs but he can’t express them verbally ...he feels proud that he can do this and I accept it...[...] I am like this with my family and friends...I always kiss them or give them a cuddle as soon as I see them”*.

It seemed that this teacher brought herself as is in her classroom creating a genuine relationship with her pupils and this helped her to deal with their behavioural problems. However, throughout the interviews the rest of the teachers did not seem to see themselves as other than “teachers”. Their role as ‘teachers’ appeared to dominate their perception about themselves. Their attitude may had to do with issues of confidentiality in this project as some of them stated that they did not expect the researcher to ask them to talk about them selves as individuals. In addition, while they were interviewed they did not seem to realise any relation between them selves as individual personalities and their role as a teacher. Although some of them were very willing to disclose information about their pupils’ personal life they did not feel like talking about their own lives.

### Teachers' self-perception as teachers

Teachers' self-perception as teachers was strongly related with the notions of motives to become teachers, job satisfaction, job effectiveness and the way the educational authority and the media deal with them.

Five of the teachers reported that they had chosen their profession because they were told that they could get a job immediately and they could have a stable salary. However, they had different dreams but they finally compromised. Despite the fact that for most the decision to become teachers was not completely theirs and that they seemed to suppress their dreams about themselves, they claimed that they did not regret becoming teachers. They said that they are happy with what they are doing as long as they are in the classroom. They even saw their relationship with the bullies as a way to offer support to these children that they lack love and understanding. *"What gives me much satisfaction is my relationship with these children [...] I can learn so much from them [...] and they help me as a parent"*, a teacher said. The teacher who worked in the campus also asserted: *"When I am not in the school I sometimes regret it to become a teacher ....but when I am at school I find satisfaction...the profession itself gives moral satisfaction"*.

The notion of internal satisfaction was also reported by a teacher as an essential component of job satisfaction. *"You have to feel like that if you want to be effective....otherwise if you feel it like a doggy work then it is soul destroying"*. Since this teacher seemed to be frustrated at not being what he wanted to be in

his life although he was offered a place at the university in Greece to study engineering, his idea implied that it is not easy to feel internal satisfaction in this job. In order to deal with his frustration he decided to continue his studies doing a masters degree in educational management in Britain. *“I learnt from that...I see things differently now....my attitude towards my pupils is different....even towards difficult children...there are things all teachers should know if they want to be effective...I am more effective now....[...] the more I get educated the more effective I become”*, he added.

All the teachers who participated in this study connected their role as academics with their relationship with their pupils. In this way, they estimated their effectiveness in the way they saw themselves functioning in two domains: the academic domain and the emotional domain, independently of whether they had postgraduate studies or not.

The teacher who worked in the campus felt that her task was to help pupils learn but she also realised that this is done within a relationship with those children. *“The message I always try to pass to them is that ‘yes, you can be better [...] all of you can improve what you are, she said. In addition, her idea about the way she functions as a teacher in the classroom implied her idea about her effectiveness as a teacher: “ [...] generally my methods are not very modern, neither is my work impressive. This doesn’t mean that I am not effective. I am effective because I can manage to improve discipline in my class, the companionship and the morale in my class, I have improved their behaviour”*. She was probably setting behaviour improvement as her priority in her task,

since according to her *“behaviour is THE problem in our classroom”*. So she could estimate her effectiveness based on the level on discipline she could achieve in her class. However, at the same time she realised that academic progress is also important but she seemed very disappointed from herself as an academic. *“Well, I tried to use collaborative methods of learning...I tried group work but I didn’t succeed. When they sit together they quarrel, they punch each other....so I use a teacher-centred way of teaching”*. She said that in a guilty way. She felt that the failure of the pupil centred process with those children was her failure as a teacher.

Her self-perception as a teacher was also affected by the way she saw herself in relation to the work of her colleagues in other schools. *“Yes, I feel illiterate in comparison with my colleagues because, as I said, I’ve seen the work of other teachers in other schools. I am feeling that I don’t do enough.....to the extent that I wonder whether I would be effective in a school with higher academic expectations, with better pupils than those of this school ”*, she said laughing, adding that *“well, I guess I can adjust”*.

This comparison seemed to affect her self-esteem as a teacher and created feelings of guilt in her. Looking at my research journal I realise that this is a common feeling for the teachers who worked in that school. Some of them perceived their service in that school as a punishment on behalf of the Ministry. They were all feeling tired and demotivated. Disappointment was also apparent when she seemed to compare her performance in academic and emotional

domain. Throughout the interview she seemed to see her self more as a counsellor rather than a teacher in the school.

Nevertheless, the rest of the teachers who participated in this study felt very effective in both domains. *“Pupils with positive attitude prevail in this classroom and this makes me very positive towards the whole class [....] I am ok with myself but there is always a way to improve. I feel that I have a close relationship with them and that I can help them to raise their academic progress”*, a teacher said. Even teachers who have children from ethnic minorities in their classroom feel that they can help them to improve their academic performance through a close relationship with them.

However, despite their sense of effectiveness teachers also asserted that their job is not an easy one at all. *“Sometimes I feel tired....I feel that I have nothing else to offer to those children”*, a teacher said after 23 years of service. Another teacher attributed her tiredness to the fact that *“we have to deal with teenagers. It’s more difficult to handle their behaviour rather than to teach them [....] I don’t feel adequately educated to face that. We should be educated more on this issue.”* Moreover, the overloaded curriculum was regarded as a problem that creates pressure to them by all of the teachers. As the teacher in the campus said: *“During the first term I was doing the policeman at school. I didn’t do a single off as I had to spend all of my time with them either giving them some extra help for the lessons or talking with them about their problems”*.



Finally, three of the teachers felt very disappointed by the way the educational authority faced them in terms of promotion. The educational system is regarded as unfair from the teachers and creates them a feeling of injustice and bitterness.

*“When I realise that other colleagues with the same years of service get a promotion and I don’t I feel very disappointed”, a teacher said. The same opinion was expressed by the teacher working in the campus. “ They put me in this problematic school and I’ ve been working here for ten years whereas most of the teachers don’t stay longer than two years in this school. I’ve been dealing with bullying and learning difficulties every day and when I went to them they didn’t give me the promotion!”*

All three teachers, however, mentioned that they feel ok with themselves no matter what the educational authorities think about them. Nevertheless, their perception about how the educational authorities were seeing them affected their self-esteem as teachers. In addition, at that time when the interviews were taking place there was an incident of violence against a teacher which led to a strong debate in the media about school bullying and it seemed that the media were accusing the teachers of bullying students at schools. This incident was broadly discussed in staff rooms and teachers inevitably brought this issue into the interview as a factor that affects their perception about themselves and their role at school. *“ We are abused by the way the media present our role. They give a very negative picture for us. They search for an opportunity to overemphasize some weakness in order to deprive us. [...] I think the State has to take some measures about us”, a teacher said.*

Generally, the discussion on the role of media in relation to teachers' self-perception as teachers raised teachers' defensiveness and revealed specific defence mechanisms employed by them in order to overcome their tensions created by the way they perceived their role.

**b) Defence mechanisms employed by the teachers**

Teachers appeared to employ defence mechanisms in two cases: when they were expressing their perception about the way the media treated them and when they were talking about the bullies and the social climate into their classroom. In the first case two of the teachers employed rationalisation to overcome their frustration of being repeatedly accused by the media as violent towards children.

*"What is obvious is that most people believe that we work very little and we don't offer what we should offer", a teacher said. "But I think that there is still a group of people who respect our work. These people realise the responsibility of the family in raising up children and they want to help children. The former don't want to undertake any responsibility and blame everyone not only the teachers".*

In the second case, although one of the teachers reported the name of the student according to the Olweus' characteristics of a bully, he then denied that this boy was presenting bullying behaviour. *"I didn't realize any problems in his relations with other children....in class there may be some contradictions because he insists a bit more in his own views, but this is normal",* he said. In that particular school (Primary 3) there was a discussion between teachers on whether they should write down the names of the children who would consider

as bullies. Finally, they decided to mention them to me orally since they were afraid if the names would get into the hands of the Parents' association or the Ministry of Education. Despite my confirmation that the forms will be confidential they insisted not to write down the names of the bullies. This teacher accepted the fact that the particular student was presenting difficulties in his relationship with the rest of the children but he considered that as a normal situation.

However, despite the fact that only two of the teachers seemed to employ rationalisation and denial in their effort to deal with bullying, the rest of the teachers asserted the thesis that they feel very stressed at school. Teachers' stress can be regarded as a factor that influences teachers' perceptions about bullying or the bullies.

### **c) Teachers' stress**

Teachers' manifested two main factors that, according to their perception were contributing to the development of their stress. These were school expectations and the children's problematic behaviour.

Three of the teachers who were teaching in Primary 3 said that they felt very stressed in that school because of the school's high academic expectations. "*In this school I feel more stressed than in other schools*", a teacher said. "*[...] I think the most pressure is imposed by the climate of the school...by the expectations*". In addition, the other two of the teachers reported that they felt stressed because of school expectations and children's problematic behaviour. As

a teacher replied: *“Children here aren’t calm. They also feel stressed because in the afternoon have to go to their private lessons and they don’t have time to play and defeat their tensions....so every morning they displace their tensions at school”*. The same opinion was also asserted by a third teacher in the same school. *“I find this school very tiring and stressful....the children are more lively here than in other schools...this happens because these children live in flats and they don’t have enough space to play in the afternoon.”*

Moreover, two of the teachers who used to work in rural areas before they had come to this school claimed that they were feeling stressed since the conditions of working in inner city schools are very different. *“I suddenly found my self in a class of 32 pupils [...] I was trying to work in the same way that I worked for 10 years in rural schools....but it didn’t succeed...I was so miserable...so unhappy....I was doubting myself all the time...I lost my confidence since I was always thinking that I am ineffective.”* Except from the boy that was presenting bullying behaviour, this teacher had in her class two other boys with behaviour and emotional difficulties. *“Their presence in the classroom increases my stress a lot. I feel pressed...every morning when I enter the classroom I wish we would not have to face anything serious. But I am very tense all the time because I am afraid that suddenly something will happen and these children will be really upset”*. As the interview went on this teacher also reported that her stress was also due to the fact that she was trying to hide the problem of these children from the rest of the class so as these children would not be stigmatised. She did not want to tell the class that the boy presenting bullying behaviour was adopted and he may have problems with that. In her effort to deal with the bully and hide his

problem she was experiencing internal contradictions and pressure which increased the level of her stress.

Finally, teachers' stress was also expressed in non-verbal ways. The teacher who worked in the campus, may not talk directly about being stressed in that school but she was smoking nervously and continually throughout the interview, she was speaking quickly, even breathlessly sometimes, loudly and was playing with her key-ring.

The presence of the bullies in the class appears in teachers' responses to be affecting the level of their stress. In addition, in their effort to give an explanation to the phenomenon of bullying teachers asserted their stereotypes which are related to bullying behaviour and consequently affect their perceptions about the bullies. It is to those stereotypes that I will now turn.

#### **d) Teachers' stereotypes**

Teachers' stereotypes, as they were expressed by the teachers who participated in this study, concerned their self-perception as teachers, teacher-pupil relationships, children coming from ethnic minorities, teaching methodologies, the role of television and bullying per se. In addition, as some of their stereotypes are the result of their personal life history, they have to do with the role of family and of the social environment in the development of bullying behaviour in children.

The teacher working in the campus said that it was difficult for her to get into teachers' stereotypes. She did not want to be labelled as "a teacher". Rather, she regarded her self as "a free person". By contrasting the notion of "teacher" with the notion of "a free person" she implied that if she accepted the former for herself she would miss the latest. Thus, a teacher, according to her could not be a "free person" as she or he has to behave and think in particular ways that their profession impose to them. She found these ways as narrow minded and very conservative. She elaborated her thoughts on that issue by saying later that she denied having become 'a teacher' as she does not think as a teacher should think. This stereotype about being a teacher affected her relationship with her pupils. *"They have to know your limits"*, she said. *"at the beginning I was extremely strict with them but as soon as they realise my limits I became 'softer'"*. She seemed to assert her authority in the classroom the way she is as a person. She did not seem to get into the role of the teacher while being in the classroom.

Moreover, two of the teachers asserted their stereotypes in their relationship with their pupils. A teacher in Primary 3 asserted that *"we discriminate pupils....we don't give equal opportunities to everyone at school"*. In addition, a teacher in Primary 2 confirmed this idea by saying that *"The class should be dominated by good behaved pupils"*. According to him: *" 'good behaved pupils' are those who are positive towards school, respect their teacher, are interested in learning and are better than problematic pupils"*. These children should be encouraged to define the climate in the class by giving more emphasis to them.

The stereotypes regarding teacher-pupil relationships were also manifested by the teachers while they were talking about pupils coming from ethnic minorities. “ *I have two pupils from Pontos in my class*”, a teacher said, “ *but I don’t have any problems to accept them since they are Christians and our educational system is based on our Christian and Greek culture. Whereas when I had a Turkish boy in my class that was adopted by a Greek couple but knew about his origin I had problems whenever I had to teach history*”. At the moment, most of the children coming from ethnic minorities in Cyprus are Christian, but a different political situation in Cyprus that would bring Muslim children into public schools would certainly challenge teachers’ stereotypes on this issue. The teacher’s idea about children coming from ethnic minorities was affecting her perception about the bully in her class who was also coming from an ethnic minority.

Stereotypes regarding teachers’ methodology were also asserted by teachers in this study. Most of the teachers seemed to overemphasise student centred teaching and to reject teacher centred methodology, feeling guilty when they had to admit that they use it in their classroom. “*I use a teacher centred way of teaching*”, the teacher in the campus said, “ *but I don’t use it in a way that I put my self in the centre of attention or as the most important person in the procedure. I just try to see them as a big team that works together*”. It seemed that the presence of bullies in her class affected her decisions about teaching methodologies. Another teacher in Primary 3 replied that she prompts her pupils to work in groups and she criticised their ex-teacher for using teacher centred

methods. This fact, according to her, influenced pupil's relations in the classroom.

Moreover, two of the teachers believed that television affects pupils' behaviour at school. *"Pupils are very much affected by what they watch on the telly and this fact makes their behaviour even more difficult"*.

Some of the teachers' stereotypes appeared to be the result of the teachers' private life experience. These were mainly concerning the role of the family and its relationship with school and their perceptions about the social environment and moral values.

According to the teacher who worked in the campus children today react in an egocentric way because of the way they are brought up. *"We put them in the centre of attention...maybe is the fact that families today are very small.... I don't know...I was brought up in a big family so we learnt that we should support each other."* In addition, she asserted the thesis that bullying is a problem coming from particular families. *"There are bullying problems in grade 2 and grade 4. Grade 4 is the second class which has serious bullying problems after mine. In grade 4 there are many siblings of my pupils."*, she claimed. Her experience from her own family also led her to a stereotype regarding parents' role. She believed that parents' attitude towards their children characterised by a complete loss of concern, in that particular school was not due to their low academic level. *"My mother was also illiterate"*, she said. *"But every day she would make us breakfast, wash and iron our clothes and ask if we did our*



*homework. These children haven't eaten any breakfast, they come to school when their mother wakes up and not on the appropriate time".*

Her perception about parents is also based in her idea about people living in the refugee campus. "*People living in the campus are very competitive with each other. They often think 'this man takes money from the state but I don't. Why not?'*", she declared. This fact, according to her, affects children relationships at school as it increases the competition among them. This stereotype about people living in the campus led to another stereotype regarding her pupils' future potentialities: "*these children come from a low economic and cultural background which condemns them to become workers, builders etc. they are not given any opportunities in their life*", she said very emphatically.

Moreover, another teacher talking about his pupils coming from ethnic minorities claimed that they had many problems at school because they have no help from home. Finally, one of the teachers reported that for children as well as the teachers "*aggression is only what we can see...so as teachers we cannot realise any other forms of bullying except from physical bullying*". The manifestation of her stereotype regarding bullying led her to the conclusion that teachers' way of thinking hides the problem at school.

Teachers' stereotypes affect teachers' perceptions about the bully or bullying but they are also related to their perceptions about the parents, the school, their colleagues and other children. These factors are nominated in the model as the

social factors that contribute to the development of teachers' perceptions about bullying or the bullies and it is in those factors that I will now turn.

### **2.2.3 The social factors affecting teachers' perceptions about bullying or bullies**

The social factors referred to this model are factors outside the teachers' private space which also affect their perceptions about the bullies or bullying. These are family support, school expectations, the parents' relationship with school, staff climate and class social climate, and the physical environment.

#### **a) Family support**

Five of the teachers who participated in this study reported that they "*bring issues from school to home*". They also said that their families support them when they talk about their problems at school. All of them said that what they discuss at home is the problematic behaviour of some of their pupils. Two of the teachers, who were a couple, worked in the same school and were teaching in the same grade but in different classes. "*Although we decided not to talk about school at home, we can't avoid it*", the wife said. "*Since we are independent persons we react in different ways in the classroom but we get on well with each other. We never quarrel about school. We help each other, although talking about school at home can be boring and sometimes tension and problems can be transferred at home*", her husband replied. What they always discuss is their pupils' bullying or problematic behaviour and, according to the wife, "*most of the times we agree about what we believe.*"

The teachers' whose partners were not teachers also reported that they mainly discuss issues regarding bullying at school with them and that they are supported by them. "*I have the chance to talk about these issues with someone who is not in the area of education and get a neutral opinion*", a teacher said.

In addition, the teacher who worked in the campus claimed that she always transfers problems from school to home and, as she stressed: "*this is unfair for my family. [...] if I feel sad because of the cases I see at school, I go home and my children and husband try to understand why I am so sad and to confront me. [...] I don't feel guilty. They give me feedback and try to be very positive to me*".

Family support seemed to be very important for teachers, especially if they have to face bullying behaviour at school. However, despite that this is the main issue they discuss at home, they also reported that they discuss school expectations with their partners as an issue that creates tension to them. This is the next factor that will be investigated in this section.

### **b) School expectations**

School expectations can be derived from the manifestation of the teachers' perceptions about the school and they are also related to teachers' expectations of themselves. It seems that this factor although it can exist in the external educational milieu has a powerful impact on teachers as it is internalised by them and consequently affects their psychological status as well.

Except for the teacher that works in the refugee campus, the rest of the teachers asserted the thesis that the schools' expectations concern the cognitive aims of education, that is to say the obtainment of knowledge and academic success. *"The expectations from our job have been increased the last 16 years"*, a teacher said. *"But the conditions of our work remain the same"*. *"I have to work in big classes in this school. I have to work in classes with 34 children and some of them can't stay sit for long"*, another teacher said.

In addition, the three teachers who worked in Primary 3 stressed that the high academic expectations of that school imposed pressure to them. *"The fact that this is an old school with high reputation makes people believe that it's the best school. This idea is imposed to the staff and the children"*, a teacher said. Even the distribution of children in different classes was done according to their social origin. *"In my class there are children from different social status and some of them are isolated from the rest"*, she said and she added that this situation created many problems in their relationships that led to psychological bullying.

Finally, the teacher who worked in the campus suggested that the school she works at has very low educational expectations. *"Working in this school is soul destroying"*, she said very emphatically.

The examination of the role of school expectations in the development of teachers' perceptions about bullying or the bullies led to the conclusion that school expectations are very important since they can function not only as the criteria for pupil academic assessment but as the criteria for the definition of

bullies or bullying in schools as well. Teachers' who participated in this study implied that if a child cannot follow the academic expectations of the school might present aggressive behaviour in their effort to attract attention and assert themselves. At the same time school expectations can be regarded as a means to discriminate pupils and schools and as a source of pressure for both teachers and pupils. Parental relationships with the school seemed to play a crucial role in the development and sustenance of school expectations. For this reason the investigation of the teacher-parent relationships is considered very crucial in this project.

### **c) Parents' relationship with school**

Parents' relationship with school can give an indication of parental expectations from school, and particularly the teacher.

All the teachers, except for the teacher who worked in the campus, reported that parents aim at getting their children in private schools and that this expectation is passed on to their children and to the teachers. Three of the teachers believed that children in private schools are better disciplined and this is the main reason parents want to send their children there. However, one of the teachers asserted the thesis that in private schools *"parents pay a lot of money, so they operate as customers....since they pay they want the school to give them what they are asking for [...]* Children also know that if they don't behave correctly they will be thrown out of the school and their parents will lose their money." Generally, discipline problems in public schools and the perception that public schools are unable to deal effectively with bullying seemed to be the main reasons, according

to the teachers, who lead parents to the decision to send their children in private schools. One of the teachers reported that many a times parents complained to her about bullying in that school. *“They protest a lot because of this problem. Bullies in my class have a lot of problems which I try to hide from the parents in order not to stigmatise the children”*.

The teacher in the refugee campus did not imply any academic expectations on behalf of the parents. Rather she reported that parents in the campus neglect their children. *“These children have no help at home, no support or even the simple concern of their parents on what they are doing at school. I’ ve been working for 4 months in that classroom and I’ ve seen only 4 parents. From those 4 only 2 of them came twice. [...] Moreover, she implied that most of the parents use physical violence at home. “ [...] so I asked them ‘How many of you are hit in your homes ?’. 20 out of 26 raised their hands! Only very few children said that they are not hit by their parents”*, she said.

She also believed that parents’ life in the campus could not be regarded a proper model of living for the children. According to this teacher children get the wrong messages from the way their parents are living. *“They see that their father is out, their mother has no control on him, he does whatever he likes, he comes back home anytime he likes and whenever he likes, he goes out drinking with his friends...”* What the teacher was saying is that parents model a kind of behavior that leads to the formation of particular perceptions in children about life and human relations.

Parents in the campus seem to transfer the tensions and problems of their social background to school, according to the teacher's opinion about them. Since they have problems in their relationships between them they pass on these problems in their children's relationships with each other. In this way they enhance bullying problems in that school. As the teacher claimed: *"Very often mothers come to school to ask us not to put their son in the same place with a particular child because they have problems in their relationship with the parents of the other child. So I think a lot of the problems in children's relationships start in the neighborhoods. Or mothers come to school and instead of criticizing their child, they criticize their child's classmates. This attitude spoils the relationship between the mothers and of course it is transferred to the children"*. It seems that mothers in that school believe that they can interfere in the way the school asserts discipline and this is one of the problems that hinders the school from dealing with bullying effectively.

After giving a general perception about parents' expectations and their relationship with school, teachers talked about the bullies' parents in particular and their relationship with the school and their children. Two of the teachers reported that they meet the bullies' parents very often and talk about the bullies' behavior. *"They even call me at home and we talk about his behaviour at home and at school"*, a teacher said. *" They come and see me very often"*, a teacher in another school said. *"We talk about the problem. They realize it but they don't know how to handle it."* Moreover, two of the teachers including the teachers in the campus claimed that bullies' parents come to school when there is a problem with their children and so the school has to call them.

The teacher in the campus said that she very rarely meets the bullies' parents and that whenever they call them at home it is only their mothers that come to discuss with them. The boys' fathers never appear at school. Generally, the mothers do not coordinate with the school very often for different reasons. As the teacher declared: *"She only came to school whenever Sotiris had a serious problem and we called her. She just came to discuss the problem with the teachers. She came 1-2 times when an Educational Psychologist came to examine Sotiris [...] but it seems that not even his mother shows any special or systematic attention to Sotiris"*. Sotiris father does not live with them and according to the teacher he is occasionally in prison.

In addition, Lazarus' parents may live together but contact with school is rare. The teacher also implied that there is a lot of abuse in their home. *"I talked with his father on the phone. I've never seen him. His mother came to see me only once during this year."*, the teacher said.

As for Marinos' parents the teacher reported that she never saw his father. His mother is the one who comes to school and deals with his problems. In her communication with his mother the teacher could get some information about the situation at home. *"His mother is a calm person....She is a very kind person and very miserable"*, the teacher said. *"In the past, when I was teaching her eldest son, and we discussed about the way their father hits them, I asked her whether he was hitting her also. She said : 'He used to hit me in the past but not now'. I have to tell you that the mother is a Hepatitis B' carrier. For a period of time, she had a serious problem because as soon as the neighbours knew about it they*



*interrupted any communication with her, she was completely isolated. [...] Most of the times when she comes to school she is crying. [...] Once she said to me: 'I am tired of coming to school only to listen to the complaints about my children and despite the fact that I tell them to become better persons and to feel pity about me, they become worse'. [...] Marinos' father also has drinking problems....because one day Marinos got angry and said to the rest of the children 'if my father gets drunk one day, he will come to school and turn you into wheat !!' he said that if his father gets drunk he will hit us all...I don't think he had said that accidentally".* The teachers' perceptions about the parents were also confirmed during the interviews with parents in the refugee campus.

This teacher was the most informed of all the teachers that participated in the study and she gave more information about the bullies' parents in relation to what the rest of the teachers said about their pupils' life at home. Generally, teachers were not very willing to give much information on this issue, either because they were reluctant in terms of confidentiality or because they did not know anything about the bullies' family life. Two of them reported that they had never seen the bully's parents at school and one of them said that she met the boy's mum once. One of the teachers who had the boy from Pontos in her class said that whenever she asked the boy's parents to come to school they did not appear. Furthermore, one of the teachers in Primary 3 said that he only once met the bully's mother. He never called her because according to him this boy *"doesn't have a serious behavioural problem that has to be discussed with the parents."* Talking with the boy's father he replied that he does not feel like coming to school and talk with the teacher. *"This is my wife's job"*, he said.

However, the father recognized that his son had a behavioural problem and he was asking for help. Finally, another teacher in that school had to face a serious case of psychological bullying in her class at that time but she did not dare to contact with the bully's parents, as the bully was a girl from a well known family. So she said “ *well...I know nothing about the situation at home.... could you please talk with the parents? It would be easier for you*”. However, since my role was a researcher, and I had to work within time limits I could not do so.

Generally, in Primary 3 the relationship of the parents with the school was limited to a typical contact. Parents were not willing to give much information to the teachers and teachers did not feel like asking more because they were afraid of the parents' reactions. In contrast with the school situated in the campus where parents were disclosing a lot of information about their private life so the teacher there felt easy to ask for more information so as she could have a holistic idea for the bully's life. These differences in the culture of the two schools were very apparent throughout the interviews with the parents and teachers.

In addition, it seemed that teachers in the same school shared the same ideas about parents and their relationship with them, sustaining in this way a common staff climate in each school.

#### **d) Staff climate**

Spending time with teachers in each school led me to the conclusion that there is an interactive relationship between them in each staff room that has to do with the way they perceive bullies or bullying. In my research journal I noted that in

Primary 3 when teachers were given the handouts with the Olweus' criteria they had a very lively discussion in their staff room whether they should write down the names of the pupils that would be regarded as "bullies". I left the room saying that I do not want to push them to do something they would not consider as appropriate and waited in another office for their reply. After a while a teacher came to me and said that they all agreed that they would not write down the names of the bullies. They would rather say them to me because they were afraid that their handouts would reach the parents or the Ministry and then they could get into trouble. However, one of the teachers implied that bullying problems persist in that school many a years because none of the teachers is willing to deal effectively with them since they are all afraid that they will get into trouble.

In Primary 2 it seemed that the head teacher dealt directly with the bullying problems. Teachers knew that they should make a referral to her and they did not participate a lot in the procedure of dealing with the problem. Generally, they were all giving an impression of relief. According to them that year they were more satisfied from pupils' behaviour since the most problematic pupils had graduated from that school.

The perception of the teacher who worked in the campus about staff climate at Primary 1 was related to her idea about the head teacher and the teachers who had taught in that class before her. She seemed rather critical about them: *"The head teacher could not help me to face the problem and he is not in the position to help since he isn't a powerful person. The Deputy head is much worse...[...] the teachers who had taught in this class before didn't help to face the*

*situation...rather their attitude was deteriorating the problem...Marinos' teacher in grade one never managed to show him love and affection. She regarded him as THE problem of the school and this passed on to the rest of the teachers".* She seemed that she was asking for more support especially from the head teacher.

However, her perception about the staff climate in the school that year was very positive. She claimed that: *"As far as the staff is concern, I would say that there is an excessive feeling of support between the members of the staff"*. Nevertheless, in my research journal the most frequent teachers' comments I noted were: *"I am fed up!"*, *"Why do they punish us by putting us in this school?"*. Most of the teachers regarded their position in that school as a punishment given from the Ministry.

Staff climate seemed to affect teachers' perceptions about the bullies or bullying, but it also affected the way they perceived their class social climate by asserting in their class their shared biases about the bullies or bullying.

#### **e) Class social climate**

Teachers' ideas about their class social climate were mainly based on the way they saw pupils' relationships in their classes and their attitude towards schoolwork. In two of the schools, Primary 2 and Primary 1 children were divided into two classes the year before. When this project was initiated in Primary 2 the pupils were mixed again and divided into three classes and in Primary 1, children were put together and formed one class. This appeared to affect the class climate in those schools.

A teacher in Primary 2 believed that this arrangement affected the class climate positively. *“At the beginning they were closer to each other. Because they were divided and mixed again they had the chance to meet again and make new relations”*, she said. However, another teacher who worked in that school reported that some of the children reacted negatively when they realized that some of their friends would not be with them. *“They were negative towards their new classmates”*, she said. *“ but now things are much better. As time passes they develop very good relations and they don’t discriminate between their classmates.”*

In Primary 1 the teacher reported that *“Last year this class had a tremendous discipline problem. It was divided into two groups (classes). When they came together we couldn’t get into the classroom. There was a competition between the two groups since they were located themselves and others in different groups”*. It seemed that her first concern was to make the children feel together like a team and not as isolated individuals. *“Most of the children in that class are egocentric. They want to have special attention and their whole behaviour was very challenging in order to attract my attention. [...] The whole class had difficulties to feel as a team. They didn’t love each other. They were very negative to each other. This problem was more obvious when they had to work in groups. It was completely impossible to work together.”*

One of the teachers who worked in Primary 3 also reported that her class is a difficult one because there are children who want to attract her attention all the time. However, she did not nominate the bully from among them. *“The girls*

*have very good relationships. Between the boys there are some contradictions, especially at the beginning of the year. But as time passes they become better because we talk about their relations. We devote 10-15 minutes every day to talk about it*", she said. In addition, a second teacher in the same school asserted the thesis that her pupils *"are good children if you talk to them individually...but when they are together they form clicks"*. Only one of the teachers claimed that there is a very positive climate in their class. *"I don't have big problems with them [...] I wouldn't say that there are intensive contradictions. Some contradictions may exist but not in a high extent. I think is because of their character"*, a teacher replied.

All of the teachers mentioned that there is a lot of competition in their classes. However, it seems that children compete for different things in different schools. The teacher in Primary 1 said that: *"For a period of time I had serious problems between Marinos and Sotiris....maybe it was their competition....who's the strongest or who's the most aggressive....or who's the most controlling over the rest. They won alternatively. Marinos couldn't accept that. Sotiris believes that he is physically stronger but Marinos more tempered.... Finally, Sotiris was hit more than Marinos!"*.

Teachers in other schools also referred to a sense of competition in their classes but for academic reasons and especially due to the fact that most of the pupils were aiming at passing their exams for private secondary schools. It seemed that since parents are very competitive with each other for this issue their competition is passed on to their children.

In addition, the phenomenon of cliques was also very common in those classes especially in Primary 3 which brings into the discussion the issue of psychological domination over the others. “ *If you talk to them individually they are very good children.... but when they are together they form cliques [...] Cliques are very competitive with each other. Their cliques are not stable. [...] They compete even within the clique they don’t coordinate with each other in groups*”. Talking about the problem of indirect bullying in her class, which seemed to be related with the existence of cliques, this teacher mentioned that: “*parents are also involved in their children’s cliques. They accused me of taking the part of the bully instead of supporting the class. [...] I think that these problems existed for many years since the children formed cliques from primary one but nobody ever dealt with that. Now they don’t feel willing to accept anymore psychological bullying*”.

Moreover, another teacher in Primary 2 reported that: “*The problem exists especially with girls. They make their cliques and even their parents are involved in that...they may call me at home and ask me why their child is isolated*”. In addition, another teacher in the same school also asserted the thesis that bullies in her class are not accepted in the children’s groups. “ *Very often the rest of the children protest saying ‘Stop telling us to be patient with him. We can’t stand him anymore. Are you going to do something with him?’ I feel so badly as children can’t understand how much I try because for them it’s a satisfaction to see him punished....they often tell me ‘ Just give us the permission to hit him once and we will kill him !’ ....they expect different things from us....they think we can correct his behaviour in a magic way*”, she said.

Furthermore, the presence of children from ethnic minorities influences the social climate of the class. As a teacher in Primary 2 said: *“There are two girls from Russia in our class but they stick together...they want to isolate themselves from the rest of the class....they help each other in the lessons. During break I never see them with other children....they want to be isolated and the rest don’t make any effort to come closer to them”*. Referring to the bully who was one of these children, the teacher said that he is very good at athletics and whenever they have a game everybody wants him in their team, but he does not really mingle with them. Only one teacher in high reputation school said that the children from ethnic minorities in his class are fully adjusted and present no problems.

Talking about the social climate in their class the teachers referred to their pupils’ attitude towards school work. All of the teachers, except the teacher who worked in Primary 1 reported that the attitude of their pupils towards school work was very positive. However, they all stressed that the children are very tired since they have to do their private lessons in the afternoon and are very tensed because they feel pushed to pass the exams for private schools. As a teacher said: *“They often protest about their homework....they ask for less work at home because they have to study a lot for their private lessons”*. Nevertheless, the teacher in Primary 1 claimed that her pupils’ attitude towards school work was very negative. *“The class has a problem with school work”*, she mentioned. *“ From the 26 pupils, I have 8, they used to be more at the beginning of the year almost half of them, that they do nothing...absolutely nothing...[...] Marinos works more often....very rarely refuses to work...and usually when he doesn’t*



*work he is very aggressive*". It seemed that the teacher was implying a relationship between the bully's attitude towards school work and his aggressive behaviour.

Finally, the teachers' willingness to teach in the particular class was mentioned by the teachers while they were talking about the social climate in their class. All of the teachers who participated in the study, except from the teacher in Primary 1, reported that they had chosen their class and were very happy to teach in their class. The teacher in Primary 1, although she seemed to have a good relation with her pupils she mentioned that teaching in that particular class was a choice of necessity and not her own choice since nobody wanted to teach in that class. "*The deputy head was afraid that he couldn't handle them and the rest of the teachers had already taught in that class and they didn't want to teach them again*", she said "*so I was the only one left to take the class [...] at the beginning I suffered a lot....it was exhausting.*"

She also mentioned that one of the reasons that the teachers did not want that class among others, was the fact that there were incidents of sexual harassment between the pupils last year. As she reported: "*There were cases of sexual harassment in my class.... especially from boys to girls....Lately I discovered that girls also harass boys sexually. These accusations began from last year. During the first term the accusations were very serious e.g. boys touched other boys' genitals. When I discovered this I became very angry. After I became so strict with that issue the problem stopped between the boys. At least I didn't receive any accusations like that again. I hope that it stopped permanently or if it*

*happens...the problem was more with Marinos and Sotiris. As they are bigger and have more physical strength than the others, so they can hit other children, they threaten others by saying 'if you tell the teacher I will hit you!'. Lazarus tried that, because the others were doing it, but finally he was hit by his 'victims'.*"

Most of the teachers tried to give an explanation of the pupils' behaviour at school. In their effort many a times they referred to the physical environment of the school and its role in the development of aggressive behaviour in children.

#### **f) Physical environment**

All of the teachers argued that the school's physical environment contributed to the development of aggressive behaviour in children. Teachers in Primary 3 which is situated in a very commercial area in the center of Nicosia reported that the school yard is very small in relation to the number of pupils. So pupils are crowded in a narrow space. They could even use the play ground in turns. Every day only one class was allowed to play in the play- ground. Talking with some of the children they seemed to be very frustrated about this situation. This fact in combination with the fact that most of the children live in the city center in big blocks of flats, according to the teachers, makes children more aggressive at school. *"Since they don't have space to diffuse their tension in the yard they bring it in the classroom"*, a teacher claimed. The building in this school was very old and could not change a lot. Finding a place to work in that school was one of the problems I had to face. So most of the interviews and the sociometric technique were done in the P.E. store room.

In Primary 2, teachers faced the same problem. The school was again situated in a central point in one of the suburbs in Nicosia. *“There is no place to widen the school yard”*, a teacher declared: *“This is the older primary school in this area. They added some extensions to get more pupils in this school but nobody thought that the yard couldn’t be extended. There is no privacy in this school. We can’t find a place to talk quietly with a parent or a child. When I have my offs I stay in the classroom because I have nowhere to go. We don’t have store rooms and we even use the library to teach Design and Technology. In addition, the building has a lot of corners and we can’t follow everything that goes on during break”*. Because of the lack of privacy I had to change rooms everyday I went to the school. So most of the interviews took place in the school kitchen or the school hall. Another teacher in the same school referred to the problem of noise pollution because of the great noise coming from the central roads that surround the school. Noise, according to her, increases pupils’ aggressiveness and teachers’ tension.

Finally, when this project was initiated Primary 1 was under construction because it was seriously damaged by an earthquake that happened five years ago and from vandalism. Throughout the teacher interview we had to interrupt three times because the noise was tremendous and we could not hear ourselves. At that point the teacher commented: *“You should be here in the first term, when beside our classroom the builders were breaking the walls with two jackhammers. On the other side of the classroom they were cutting irons with a compressor.[...] The mess in this school is also a crucial factor for the development of tense and*

*aggression in this school, because there is and there was so much mess in the school and in the classrooms [...] The situation is desperate!”.*

These were the social factors that seem to affect teachers’ perceptions about the bullies or bullying. However, throughout the interviews it became apparent that the teachers’ personal life journey was a factor that could influence their interpretation about their pupils’ actions and this is one of the basic components of the Model on teachers’ perceptions about bullying or bully.

#### **2.2.4 Teachers’ personal history**

The teachers’ personal history was investigated in terms of four main elements: their childhood, their relationship with their parents, their education and their experiences from war.

To begin with, all of the teachers reported that they had very pleasant childhood years. Especially, three of them who were grown up in the countryside claimed that they have a special relationship with nature and they believed that the fact that children today do not have the chance to live in the nature contributes to the increase of their aggressiveness. In addition, all of them declared that they had a very good relationship with their parents. Furthermore, two of the teachers whose parents were illiterate believed that the educational status of parents could not be regarded as an excuse for children’s negative attitude towards school since their parents were uneducated but they helped them “*realize how important education was*”. Most of the teachers also admitted that their decision to become teachers was mainly influenced by their parents’ wish to do so. Especially, all female

teachers that participated in the study mentioned that they became teachers because their parents did not want them to leave home and study abroad.

All of the teachers said that they had graduated from the best high schools in Cyprus and had excellent results in their studies. The teacher in Primary 1 reported that she had studied education in Australia and not in Cyprus, after the war and that she was working in factories during her studies. As this teacher claimed: “ *Working in factories before I became a teacher influenced my political thinking the way I am thinking about people and especially people in need. That’s why I was able to work in this school for so many years.*” She also believed that as she studied abroad she was different from the rest of her colleagues and was finding it difficult to get into teachers’ stereotypes in Cyprus.

Finally, three of the teachers were refugees but claimed no loss of human lives in their families during the war. Nevertheless, the fact that the teacher in Primary 1 was also a refugee helped her to empathize with the particular problems of the people living in the campus. Thus, it seemed that she could manage to gain their trust and so she could more easily communicate with them and get some information about their private life. This was the reason that she could say more than the rest of the teachers about their personal life at home.

In addition, one of the teachers mentioned that he lived in the occupied area for a year. He was 7 years old when the war happened and that year was very crucial for him. “*It seemed that I had suddenly grown up*”, he said. The experience of being enclaved as a child seemed to influence the way he was thinking about his

childhood years, although he claimed at the beginning of the interview that he believed that he had lived a happy childhood. This teacher mentioned that when he talks to his pupils today he mentions to them about his experience of being an enclave child and they are always very interested and ask him a lot of things about that. His experiences from war generally appeared to play a crucial role in the way he was seeing the transformation of priorities and values for people in contemporary society. He very often referred to the loss of values today and how important it is for the school to find a way to bring back to children's life the notion of humanistic values.

Teachers' personal history seemed to influence the way they perceived their pupils and especially the bullies or bullying, in combination with the physiological, psychological and social factors mentioned in previous sections. Thus, teachers' perceptions about the bully will be the next component that I will now turn to.

#### **2.2.5 Teachers' perceptions about the Bullying or Bullies**

Teachers' perceptions about bullies concerned the following factors: bullies' physical appearance, relationship with others, intelligence, school attendance and character. In addition, teachers who participated in the study seemed to have different perceptions about bullying behaviour. Thus, they regarded bullying either as a reaction to external stimuli or as a component of the boys' character or as a modelling of parental aggressive behaviour or even as something that does not really exist!

**a) Perceptions about physical appearance**

According to one teacher a bully's physical appearance can facilitate the initiation of bullying acts through body signs. *"Sotiris is different due to his physical appearance. He is taller and stronger. Marinos is strong but doesn't seem different. He is not as tall and fat as Sotiris. He is smaller but he has strength due to his temper. Sotiris is very tall, physically more developed than other children so he can threaten them only with his body size. He may push a child with his whole body without touching him. He can go beside him, stick his body on him and push him with his whole body. [...] He does this very often. Sotiris due to his body size panics them very often without hitting them or without going to hit them. But if he hits them....the slaps and punches they get from him are very bad because nobody can hit him back. If Marinos tries to hit them, it is possible that someone else will hit him back"*, the teacher said.

During participant observation in Primary 1, I realized that there was a competition between the bullies in the same class. Sotiris may be physically stronger than Marinos, but Marinos knew how to handle others and use his clique to win over his antagonist. So it seemed that Marinos tried to use other children to hit him back by forming a clique that would balance his strength against someone stronger and taller. As their teacher reported: *"Marinos may not be physically strong but he is more tempered. He is also a leader [...] they (Marinos' friends) often told Sotiris 'Ok...we will be waiting for you after school and you will see what we will do to you....' In those cases Sotiris didn't dare to leave school after the lessons had finished because he saw their organized clique and he knew that he could hit Marinos on his own but not the whole clique"*.

### **b) Relationship with others**

According to the teachers' opinions bullies were seeking popularity and attention. *"Most of the children like Marinos were very egocentric. I had always to pay attention only to Marinos, or only to Sotiris, or only to Lazarus. These are children that wanted to have a special attention and their whole behaviour was very challenging in order to get my attention"*, their teacher said. In addition, in the sociometric technique the bully who was bigger and stronger than the others was the least popular in the class. The children reported that they would never vote for him although he always wants to be a member of the pupils' council.

However, it seemed that Marinos was also seeking popularity and attention by forming his own clique. Their teacher confirmed this idea by saying: *"Marinos has his followers...he very often can prompt others to do something... there are 3-4 pupils who are always with him and he forced them to do something so as he could hide himself and these children didn't dare to tell the teachers. I don't think they were faithful to him...so one of them told me that he was afraid to accuse him to teachers because if they accused him or tell the teacher Marinos can hit them"*. In this way, Marinos also managed to be elected in the pupils' council. *"Interestingly, Marinos although he is probably the most aggressive child in the class, he is always elected during the last 2-3 years in the class pupils' council"*, his teacher claimed. *"First of all they are afraid of him. I think he threatens them ' You'll see what will happen to you if you don't vote for me!' [...] I don't know if the children want to give him a chance...they elect him to make him feel more responsible and have a better behavior towards them...some intelligent children like Irene and Stella once told me that they vote for him to*



*make him be a better pupil, a better person.... they think this is a motive for Marinos to be good....but I think that in some cases threat works more effectively.”*

Nevertheless, the bullies in that school were not the only children to seek for others' attention and especially the teachers' attention. The adopted boy had the same aim according to his teacher. *“I feel that he has a need to attract my attention and to ensure that I am dealing with him. He wants others to deal with every detail the way he does”*, she said. In addition, he did not seem willing to accept punishment but he was the first one to accuse others in order to attract the teachers' attention. This fact appeared to affect his relationships with others. As his teacher said: *“ Other children expect particular kinds of behaviour from him. They don't accept him anymore because he never accepted others to do something bad to him [...] the rest of the children protested when I tried to talk to them about being patient with him since I was trying to hide the problem from them in order not to isolate him. They said: ‘Stop telling us to be patient. Are you going to do something or not?’”* It would be necessary to add to this point that in that classroom there were two more children with behavioural difficulties and they seemed to become a clique on their own. They teased each other and they could all become very aggressive. The teacher did not know what to do in this case because each child had its own problems which she tried to hide from the rest of the class.

Moreover, another teacher in Primary 3 asserted the thesis that bullies can behave differently in the playground and in the classroom. *“Spyros is quiet in the*

*classroom. The problem with him is in the playground".* Doing participant observation I came to the conclusion that Spyros was isolated in the classroom. This idea was supported by the children's reply on the sociometric technique and the teachers' perception. *"He is a bit isolated because this situation was created in the past...maybe from primary 1. Maybe he wasn't a good athlete or a good pupil. What affects their attitude towards a child is whether this child is adjusted to their habits.....and Spyros isn't...for some reason...he doesn't function the same way...Spyros wants to be different....when he gets into the group and participates in their activities they don't have any problems with him...but sometimes he reacts negatively for some reason"*, the teacher said. Furthermore, two more teachers agreed with this idea when they were talking about the bullies in their classes. *"In the classroom it doesn't create any problems.... This happens only in games [...] his reaction in games prompted others to provoke him all the time...this happens mainly during the break...some children from other classes when they win they tease him..."*. The second teacher also believed that *"We have those "minor" incidents every day...every day he will do something else...when I am in the classroom he may not be so disturbing...but he will be a real problem in the yard or with another teacher....and then they all come to me to accuse him."*

As for the children coming from ethnic minorities is concerned, the teacher who had the boy from Pontos in her class asserted that he was very isolated. *" He insists to stay apart from the rest, as the children from ethnic minorities often do....they are negative towards others....[...] he has some difficulties because of his limitations in the language use."* Generally, the teachers' perception about

children coming from ethnic minorities was that *“their past is unclear and so it is their future. They were born in a country they never met. Their parents immigrate here to work and tell them that they will go back although they don’t see a better future in their country”*. This perception implied that these children had many insecurities that they bring to school. Nevertheless, the teacher did not seem able to communicate with their parents and find a way to help them face these insecurities and adjust into their environment.

### **c) Bully’s cognitive ability and school attainment**

The teachers’ perception about a bully’s cognitive ability was strongly connected in three cases with the way they dealt with people around them. The teacher who worked in the campus mentioned that two of the boys, namely Marinos and Sotiris did not have any IQ problems and so they could manipulate people around them. *“They have the ability to do things and then hide them or persuade others that they didn’t do them [...] Marinos can do something but he will handle the situation in a way that you can’t really understand who did it or who prompted others to do it or who started it”*, she said. Whereas, Lazarus the third boy who presented bullying behaviour had low IQ, according to their teacher and so he could not hide himself from the teacher. Because of this Lazarus had very low popularity among children and he was often hit by his victims. This teacher also connected the perception about children’s IQ with her perception about parental IQ. *“Lazarus has low IQ”*, she said *“and if you see his mother she also has low IQ”*. She claimed that *“heredity is an important factor for low IQ. This mother is neither clever nor educated. You can detect that as soon as you see her. She is also slightly mentally retarded.”* When I saw her mother I realized

that she could not communicate effectively. She could hardly understand the questions and she replied with a very small sentence or with one word. She also repeated most of the questions instead of giving a direct answer. Nevertheless, in the WISC III Lazarus' scores were higher than Marinos's scores. Marinos had the lowest scores of all the pupils who participated in the study (see Table 10, p.267). Generally, their teachers seemed to believe that low IQ was one of the reasons that lead to bullying behaviour in schools.

In addition, a teacher in Primary 3 believed that a girl who was very manipulative with the rest of the children in the class and was finally isolated she was one of the cleverest pupils in the school, connecting in this way the girls' cognitive ability with her ability to manipulate people. In the sociometric technique it was apparent that this girl was isolated at that time from the rest of the class. However, the rest of the children did not regard her as an aggressive person since, according to their teacher“ *for children aggression is only physical*”.

Except for the teacher who worked in the campus, teachers reported that the bullies they had in their classes were clever. They mostly supported their opinion on their perception about their school attainment. “*Tassos is very clever*”, a teacher In Primary 3 said about the bully. “*He interrupts others in the class because he always wants to be the one who gives the answers... maybe this is what makes him seem aggressive.*” In addition, a teacher in Primary 2 mentioned that: “*Andreas (Pupil 4) is very clever. He is always involved into discussions, he is critical and knows many things*”. These two children got the highest scores on

the WISC III. The teacher talking about the boy from Pontos said that he is very clever, despite his difficulties with the language. *“He can read well although he can’t understand everything he is reading. However, in Maths he is excellent”*. On the WISC III Giorgos’ scores were quite high in relation to other children.

The three bullies in Primary 1 all received special education during their attendance in primary school. One of them had repeated primary one and was one year older than the rest. However, they still had to face many learning difficulties. Their teacher believed that in the case of Marinos special education was used by his previous teachers as a means to get rid of him. He did not really need any special help. As she asserted: *“Marinos is good in Greek but had some problems in Maths. [...] Her teacher in primary 1 had sent him to the special class to get rid of him. I think special education was used in the same way in grades 3 and 4. He was sent to the special class so as he would not hinder the lesson. On the other hand, I don’t think this is correct because you are given the right to tell him ‘You are the problematic. Get out. Go somewhere else and leave us alone’. It is finally a way to show rejection, if you use special education like this [...] as he was regarded by his teachers as THE problem of the school he thought that ‘if I get angry or the teacher gets angry with me he will send me out, so I don’t have to stay in the classroom’”*. According to this teacher, the boy internalized her colleague’s perception and used it in order to leave classroom and sometimes to leave school. Thus, he was actually manipulating the teacher.

Nevertheless, Lazarus, according to the teacher had to attend the special class because he had serious educational problems. *“Lazarus has indeed a mental*

*problem. His problem was not only his behaviour. He also had academic problems*", she said. Looking at the schools' archives I could realize that Sotiris and Lazarus attended special education from primary 1 to primary 6. Lazarus had a consistent attendance whereas Sotiris' attendance was interrupted from time to time. Since his problem was mainly behavioural when he showed a sign of better behaviour the special needs teacher wrote a report saying that this pupil did not need to attend special education and so he stayed in his class. As children with learning and behavioural difficulties were many in that school the teacher had to do so in order to be able to deal with all of them. Furthermore, her teacher believed that *"He is not a bad pupil"*.

#### **d) Bully's character**

Throughout the interviews most of the teachers manifested their perception about the bully's character in a very direct way.

*" I wouldn't say that Tassos is aggressive", a teacher said. "He is just a bit more lively than he should be..."*. This teacher did not seem to interpret any of Tassos' behaviour as bullying or aggressive. In the same school, which is a high reputation school, another teacher replied that she would not say that the particular boy is presenting bullying behaviour, although that she acknowledged the fact that children could have a different opinion. *"Themistoklis is very spontaneous"*, she said. *" he can't control himself and he reacts negatively when he doesn't like something. [...] he may laugh at someone else but he hasn't learned to control himself ...he gets angry very easily if others make fun of him, so they tease him on purpose in order to make him get angry....but he isn't*

*mean....he gets angry easily and he may become physically violent....he thinks that in this way he can solve his problems*". This teacher asserted the thesis that bullying is a reaction to external stimuli and that the boy had been labeled as "a bully" by the rest of the children who attempted to reinforce this picture of him by making him prove to himself and to them that he deserves his label. However, the teacher did not regard this as problematic.

In addition, another teacher in Primary 2 believed that bullying is a component of the boys' character. Talking about the boy's aggressive tendencies he mentioned that these are expressed in bullying behaviour. As he said: *"if they provoke him in the class he can stand up and hit them even in the class...this is his character....he gets angry very easily...later he can ignore what I had told him and hit someone else...and say again 'sorry, I didn't want to do that'" [...]* however, *I can't get into his psychosynthesis [...]* he is not always aggressive....*he rarely creates problems in the classroom....his aggressiveness is due to the fact that he showed it in the yard and he has been stigmatized by the rest of the children...that's my belief....I wonder why the pupils who never fought with him also believe that he is aggressive. He has an aggressive tendency which becomes real aggression with continuous provocation and this creates an image for them*". Again, it seemed that this teacher implied that bullying was in this case a reaction to an external stimuli which created a picture for the child that was reinforced in his relation with other children. Furthermore, this teacher did not seem aware of the role of the children as observers of bullying at school.

Another teacher believed that the bully in her class is a perfectionist who deals with details in the class and wants everybody to deal with “his problems” by commenting loudly everything he thinks is a problem e.g. *“Miss, the boy at the front moved a bit”* or *“Marias’ shoes are untied”*. This teacher asserted the thesis that his bullying behaviour was an attempt to attract others’ attention in order to confirm their interest.

This idea was also asserted by the teacher who worked Primary 1. In addition, she expressed her perception about the character of one of the boys with whom she was feeling more connected, as he was the one abused by his father. She said: *“Marinos knows that I know his problem. Maybe because I told him that I could protect him [...] to tell the truth I really love him because he is a generous child. If he didn’t have this particular problem and if he was living in better conditions he could be a very good boy....he is “made of good material” [...] I think he is sensitive but his aggressiveness sometimes deceives us. It makes us believe that he is bad. But the truth is that he is very sensitive”*. This teacher believed that these children wanted to attract attention at school because they lack attention at home. Each of them had a different reason to present bullying behaviour. Marinos models his fathers’ and brothers’ behaviour and he represses a lot of tension and anger as he experiences all forms of violence at home. Sotiris feels neglected by his mother and rejected by his father, so he seeks to affirm himself in his relationships with others at school. Finally, Lazarus wants to find a place for himself at school as he has always been the “stupid one” at home.



### **2.2.6 Bully's actions**

Teachers who participated in this study reported that three children were presenting physical bullying, one was presenting only verbal bullying, three of them were presenting physical and verbal bullying and two were presenting all forms of bullying, namely physical, verbal and psychological.

The three children who were only presenting physical bullying were in Primary 2. Two of the children who presented physical and verbal bullying were in Primary 3, as well as the boy who according to his teacher was presenting only verbal bullying. The two children who presented all forms of bullying were in Primary 1. The third one in Primary 1 was only presenting physical and verbal bullying.

Interestingly, all the boys who were physically abused at home or witnessed spouse abuse at home presented physical or physical and verbal or all forms of bullying behaviour. However, three boys who had never experienced physical abuse in one way or another at home also presented physical or physical and verbal bullying at school.

In addition, the bullies in the school that was situated in the campus used another way to resist when they were not feeling happy at school. As their teacher said: *“Every time Marinos had a problem at school he left school in the middle of the lessons and went home. He was lost from school”*. While I was doing the research in that school, not only Marinos but Sotiris and Lazarus as well left school because they were angry. Once I had to follow Sotiris home and I wrote

about the incident in my research journal. Sotiris had left from school because during break a man hit a teenage girl outside the school yard. Sotiris saw the scene and shouted at him. The man turned to him threatening him with a long piece of wood. After that incident Sotiris jumped out of the school fence and ran home. I ran after him but I could not reach him. I knocked at his door many a times but he did not reply, so I left. A month later he told me that that day he was in and was seeing me as he was hidden behind the curtain knocking on his door. *“I was seeing you miss. I knew it was you but when I decided to open the door you had already left.”* He said that with a sense of disappointment. When I asked him why he did not open he said that at that moment he did not want to talk to anyone. He wanted to be alone.

In addition, Marinos was transferring his tension from home to school and according to his teacher seemed to realize that. His teacher referred to a particular incident that led her to this conclusion. *“ That day within the first teaching hour, the first 30 minutes, Marinos managed to hit, to pull the hair and annoy three pupils, during the lesson. My comment was...because I know that Marinos was abused....I asked him what had happened that morning. ‘Did your father hit you? If yes, it is not your classmates’ fault’ ....I was very strict with him and my tone was very tense. Marinos started crying. He is not use to cry easily. He just gets angry but never cries. He started crying. He really had a bad day that morning [...]. Finally he said to me ‘yes, my father always hits me, even if my younger brothers are fighting with each other I am the one who pays for them. He always blames me and he only hits me’ ”.* This teacher implied that when that boy felt secure enough he admitted his reality and in this way released

his tension. In addition, the way his teacher presented the incident helped him to acknowledge the consequences of his actions and revealed that bully's actions lead to particular teachers' actions.

Teachers' actions as a result of teachers' perceptions about the bully and as a reaction to the bully's actions, is the last component of this model in which I will now turn.

### **2.2.7 Teachers' actions**

Teachers declared that they employ the following strategies in order to deal effectively with bullying or the bullies: dialogue, punishment, reward, ignorance, body touch, communication with parents, and coordination with specialists.

All of the teachers who participated in this study used dialogue in combination with other strategies in order to face bullying in their class. Dialogue is employed with the whole class about their relationships or individually with the bully. Talking with the whole class, teachers focus on the development of good relationships between the children, the notion of mutual acceptance and the characteristics of adolescence. As a teacher said: *"every morning before we start our lessons we talk for 15 minutes about these issues...first of all we made a notebook with the subject "I am improving my self". In that notebook we write our aims and how we can achieve them, what should we do for others and we make a self-assessment every month. We talk about how we can include others in our group.... The result was that they tried to be patient with each other. They were saying to each other that they should help those pupils who have problems.*

*Now and as time passes.... they begin to doubt what we were saying 'Why should we always have to be patient? Why others don't try to become better?' These two children really disturb them".* In this case the teacher had to say to the rest of the pupils to ignore the bully and continue with their work. At the same time she tells off the bully. However, this approach does not seem very effective since the rest of the class protested against her and were very rude to her. *" They were very angry towards me and said that I do nothing for the problem. So at the end I had to tell them off instead of the bully",* the teacher said.

In addition, another teacher also said that she uses R.E. time to do social education and finds that this is very important since children can reflect on their attitude towards others. Nevertheless, the effect of this strategy was temporary, since after the lesson the children repeated the same behaviour. In the same high reputation school, the teacher who had to face a serious incident of indirect bullying in her class tried to talk out things with the whole class, since she was afraid that if she talked with the bully individually her parents would protest saying that she is biased towards their child. So in the discussion with the whole class she mentioned general issues like accepting others and try to work as a team. She reported that she was accused by the rest of the parents and children that at the end, she supports the bully and does nothing for the rest.

Talking individually with the bullies seemed to be more effective, according to the teachers. *"When I talked with him he could understand his fault",* a teacher said. *" I told him not to pay attention to what others say about him",* he added. Generally, this teacher did not want to talk with the bully directly about his

behavioural problems because she was afraid that he would become very defensive and stop the dialogue. So most of the times she had a general discussion with him. In addition, she was trying to hide the problem from the rest of the class in order not to let the child being stigmatized, so again talking with the whole class she avoided talking about the behaviour of the particular boy. This fact led to the children's frustration.

The teacher who worked in the campus also employed individual talks with the bullies. *"This works with Marinos.....and Sotiris..."*, she said. *"If you talk to them individually, at a personal level....especially Marinos...he can completely communicate and understand"*, she said.

This teacher was very firm and assertive when she talked to them individually. She wanted to be honest and genuine with them. She did not ignore anything, she wanted to get them face their reality but at the same time she was very supportive. She was seeing herself as a counselor in that school not just as a teacher.

Punishment was used by most of the teachers in verbal form. Most of the teachers reported that they often tell off the bullies. However, the teacher who worked in the campus claimed, with an obvious sense of guilt that she sometimes used corporal punishment: *"there are times when I realize that the only way to face their behavioural problems is to slap a child.... to use corporal punishment.... I use counseling, negotiation, aggression, threat. If I get to the*

*point to say after all these measures 'If you do that again I will slap you', then it is the only thing that works", she said.*

A teacher in one of the schools believed that the use of reward could be more effective than the use of punishment. According to him the teacher should enable the well behaved pupils to dominate the class by rewarding positive behaviour. *"In this way", he said " I am trying to impose on them this positive climate...by being fair to all of them, without stigmatizing pupils. [...]I am not always rewarding the same pupils...I reward good work and good behaviour generally and I think this is very effective"*. It seemed that this teacher was trying to get pupils with behavioural difficulties back into the learning procedure so that they could enhance a positive idea about themselves as pupils. The same strategy was also employed by two more teachers. The teacher who had a bully coming from an ethnic minority reported: *"I had to find a different way to help him, although he doesn't want to be given different material from the rest of the class. He feels stigmatized and he refuses to do his work if it's different from the work of the rest of the class. So I try to explain to him in more simple language what he has to do or I may give him some more explanations so as he can work like others"*. In addition, another teacher claimed that she often prompts the bully to be more actively involved in class activities and to participate in class discussions, so as he could feel a member of the team. Teachers who use this strategy find it more effective with bullies, than other strategies.

Moreover, three of the teachers believed that ignoring a bullying accident may be effective since it can defuse tension in the classroom. *"If something happens", a*

teacher in Primary 3 said, *“I let them solve it themselves. I don’t want to continually interfere in their relationships, unless a problem becomes very serious”*. Another teacher in that school expressed the same idea. Taking into account the culture of the particular school I would suggest that the fear of parents’ interference and defensive reaction was the reason that led teachers to this attitude.

Furthermore, body touch was used by the teacher in the campus to communicate with the bullies. *“These children may understand their emotional needs but they can’t always express this understanding ....they can never say that in words ....but they will show their need it in other ways”*, the teacher said. Body touch would also give an indication of the way children in that school were related to their significant adults. This fact led this teacher to believe that body touch could be used as a channel for communicating messages of care and love to pupils that they experience physical violence in their homes. It seemed that it was an attempt to give them an alternative idea of how others may use their body to relate to them.

Moreover, most of the teachers believed that the communication and dialogue with the bully’s parents is very important in facing the problem so they very often called their parents at school and talked to them individually about their children’s behaviour at home and at school. However, except from the teacher in the campus the rest of the teachers seemed to lack very important information about children’s life at home. For example in one of the cases of domestic violence the teacher did not seem to know about that and thought that aggression

is just a component of the boy's character. Other teachers admitted lack of information regarding the bully's life at home and asked me to tell them what the parents said at their interview. Their attitude brings again into the discussion the issue of confidentiality in this project. I did not deliver any information to the teachers, but it seemed to me that confidentiality was the main reason teachers could not get the information they needed from the parents.

The same problem seemed to affect the teachers' relationship with the educational psychologists or other specialists. Most of the teachers did not seem to regard the role of the educational psychologist as important in helping them to face the problem of bullying in schools. One of the teachers said that since the problem of aggression was something the boy presented since he was in nursery they should be referred to an educational psychologist earlier. "*Now it's too late. The psychologist can't do much*", he said. Generally, most of the teachers did not ask for any special help from an educational psychologist. They rather talk about the problem of bullying between them or the head-teacher and if the problem is very serious they also talk with the inspector. Only the teacher in the campus referred for special help but she was very disappointed. In my question whether she asked for any special help her reply was: "*The head- teacher couldn't help and he is not in the position to help, the head-deputy is much worse...I talked about it with the educational psychologist and she told me ' I know you can face it'*". She did not seem to trust any specialist and this was more obvious when an educational psychologist came to do the WISC III with the children. That day the teacher told me that she does not believe in what the psychologist says about her pupils because "*they only think theoretically....they just visit schools once a year*



*to admit that there is a problem, as if we didn't know about that, but never give us clear guidelines so as we can know where we are going....”*

Thus, from the teachers' perceptions about their actions three main points came out: the first one was their need for support. Four of the teachers, including the teacher in the campus, expected some help from me as a researcher or they even asked me directly to act as a counselor and talk to particular pupils and their parents in order to investigate some more cases of bullying. This was done in the high reputation school since none of the teachers, not even the head teacher, were feeling that they could talk with the parents and get the information they needed. Since I was a third person with a neutral identity at school, according to their perception, I could have access to private information more easily as the parents could trust me more. In addition, many a time teachers seemed very insecure about the way they were handling the bullies and asked me directly if I believed they were doing the right thing. As a teacher told me “ *I am waiting for you to give me some more information....just for me...completely confidentially and informally...I am waiting from you to tell me what actually happens with him and how I can handle him better...I need some help with that*”. All of the teachers at the end of the interviews wished me good luck with the project and added that they find the subject extremely important for them. They said that they were looking forward to see the final results and the suggestions. However, they were very firm with me saying that they want to get practical suggestions and not theoretical affirmations.

The second issue that came up was the need for the construction of a more consistent code of discipline in primary schools. There are some general rules about punishments included in the “Rules for Primary Education” but they are very general and consequently, according to the teachers, ineffective. As the teacher in the campus said: *“Even those punishments that we are told to use when we had to face one of the worst cases of bullying in school”*. This fact raises teachers’ stress and insecurity as they feel that they have the whole responsibility for the way they deal with the bullies and they also believe that no body can protect them if they do not choose the right way to deal with the problem.

Finally, the role of a counselor in primary schools seemed to become a necessity as time goes by. At the moment in Cyprus there are counselors only in secondary schools. However, problems with a longitudinal character like bullying exist from previous years. The role of a counselor in primary schools, especially in schools where the social environment aggravates the problem, would contribute to help schools face the problem more effectively through prevention and intervention programs.

According to the teachers’ perceptions about the bully in this study it seemed that teachers identify their perception about the bully with their perception about bullying. Thus, they do not seem to see the person in isolation from the act. Rather, by dealing with the bullies they try to handle the broader problem of bullying in their school. In addition, their perceptions are influenced by factors that affect their psychological status and are related to their social activity and

personal life journey. As for the factors that affect their physiology, they do not seem to have a direct influence on the way they perceive bullying or bullies. Finally, since there are not any formal guidelines in facing the problem and since each case of a bully is different, teachers have to find their own way to deal with the problem which leads to a variety of actions.

As most of the teachers implied one of the main problems in dealing with the bullies is to detect their way of thinking. Role play activities could help the teachers to prompt the pupils who present bullying behavior to talk about how they feel as bully's or victims through identification and projection. This was a strategy used in this project and it will be presented in the next section.

### **2.3 Role-Play activity with the bullies**

Role-play was used in this project for two main reasons. Firstly, it could be a pleasant and easy way to get bullies to talk about bullying without being defensive by feeling judged or accused. Secondly, through role-play the bullies would have the chance to explore new ways of responding to an aggressive situation.

The boys' participation in the role play activity led them through a process of identification with the bully and the victim which enabled them to talk about the feelings, thoughts and perceptions of the two main participants in an act of bullying.

### **2.3.1. Identification with the bully**

Through the process of identification with the bully the boys talked about the bully's feelings, perceptions and intentions.

#### **a) Bully's feelings and perceptions**

Firstly, the boys who participated in this study referred to the bully's feelings and perceptions regarding their victim and their self.

Seven out of the nine boys believed that the bully was feeling very happy and proud by making someone else miserable. However, some of them also referred to the existence of negative feelings like hatred and evil towards the victim. They based this idea on their understanding of the perception of the bully about the victim. According to them the bullies do not like their victims, they think that they are bad, they consider them as their enemies and they do not want them to be in their team. They also confirmed this assumption by attributing the blame to the victim saying that the victim may have said something before that annoyed the bully or he may have put on the bully before or accused him to the teacher for doing something bad. In this way, they tried to legitimate the bully's negative feelings towards their victim.

Only one of the boys replied that the bully was feeling lonely and he had bullied the other boy in order to show off to the rest of the children and gain some friends. This boy was one of the less popular boys in his class according to the sociometric scores and he was probably projecting his own feelings.

Finally, one of the boys said that the bully was just quick-tempered and he could not control himself. Actually, this was the idea the boy's parents' and teacher expressed about him and he was now projecting it on to this character.

In addition, the boys talked about the bully's feelings and perceptions about themselves. Two of the boys implied that the bully had many friends and he was just trying to show off to them. Since the rest of the class appraise their behaviour they could manipulate them and become their leader. It seemed that they regarded the bullies as people with high self-esteem and very popular among the others.

The bullies' feelings and perceptions about their selves in relation to others were also commented upon while the boys were talking about the issue of punishment and the way the bully dealt with it. Punishment, according to the boys, created feelings of sadness and loneliness for the bullies. They appeared to consider punishment as a way of physical and emotional isolation that affects their popularity since everyone would support the victim and the bully would be left alone feeling unwanted by the teacher and the children in their class. As a boy asserted very emphatically "*nobody likes being alone. We all want to have friends*". This boy had scored zero in the popularity factor of the sociometric technique.

Furthermore, according to some of the children bullies feel annoyed, isolated, badly about their selves, guilty, offended, humiliated and stressed. The main reasons reported by the boys that created stress to the bully were the possibility of the teacher informing the bully's parents about the incident, the possibility of

having to face the same behaviour from the rest of the children and the fact that the punished bully wants to cry but he has to suppress his feelings of frustration in order to sustain his self-esteem and his popularity. Three of the boys believed that the bullies do their best to show that they are “*cool and tough*”. They do not want others to know their real feelings because then they would be laughing at them and this would diminish their self-esteem.

Bully’s self-esteem was also mentioned by the boys when they expressed their opinions about an apology on behalf of the bully. Seven boys reported that they saw apology as the only way for the bully to solve the problem he created. However, they admitted that apology was not an easy task as it threatened their ideal self-image. As a boy said “ *apology would be the right thing to do in order to find a way out of his problem but at the same time it would be a mistake since by apologising he would show weakness and nobody would hold him in high esteem any more*”. Another boy believed that when thinking about apologising the bully would experience internal conflict since the image he wanted to assert for himself was the “*tough and cool guy*”, so if he apologised everybody would laugh at him.

One of the boys also asserted the thesis that the bully may be afraid that the victim would not accept his apology since he has been annoying him for a long time and that he would take advantage of his “weakness”. Feeling rejected by the victim would be a serious “punishment” for the bullies that would deprive them of their sense of high self-esteem.

Three of the boys asserted the notion of empathy on behalf of the bully as the first step towards apology. They all believed that the bully could understand how his victim feels as he experiences the same feelings after being punished. In addition, they thought that the bully could understand how the victim really feels about him by observing his behaviour. *“He (the victim) may not talk to him or not play with him”*, a boy said. However, he admitted that *“some children don’t understand how others feel. They may say ‘I don’t care about how he feels. I will do it again when the teacher will not be there and tomorrow he will be happy again’”*.

It seemed that all the boys brought into the discussion the issue of self-esteem as a main component in the bully’s psychology and gave the impression that the bully’s effort was all about trying to sustain a high self-esteem in their relationship with others. This assumption was also passed on to the boy’s aspects about the bully’s intentions to initiate an act of bullying towards another child.

#### **b) Bully’s intentions**

All the boys who participated in this study agreed that the bully was acting intentionally and his act had a particular purpose. The most frequently reported intention of the bully was the social isolation of the victim. According to six of the boys the bully aimed at making the victim feel alone, depriving him of his friends, making the rest of the children neglect him and not play with him and prompting the rest to make fun of him so as he will feel sad and lonely. It appeared that the boys realised the emotional impact of social isolation on the victim. So they implied that the bully knowing about this fact he could use social

isolation to inflict not only physical but emotional pain as well on the victim. Again these boys tried to attribute the blame to the victim in order to give a proper and morally accepted explanation for the bully's actions.

In addition, some of the boys believed that the bully wanted to show off his cleverness or physical strength. The bully, according to some of the boys, initiates an act of bullying against another boy in his effort to demonstrate his physical strength or cleverness in order to make friends, to impress the girls, to gain peer support or to prompt fear in others. As a boy argued: “ *he wanted others to believe that he is strong and he showed them what would happen to them if they ever tried to put on him. The message he was sending to them was ‘be careful with me’. In this way nobody would ever annoy him* ”. This boy came from an ethnic minority and, as his father and teacher stated, the rest of the children used to tease him when he first came to that school.

Two of the boys at a high society school implied that the intentions of the bully lay in the competition between him and his victim. One of them said that: “*maybe the victim was coming from a poor family whereas the bully was rich and because of this the bully didn’t want the victim in his team. He thinks he is inferior because he is poor*”. The second boy stated that “*they were both very good pupils and the teacher may have liked the victim more than the bully, so the bully tried to humiliate him so that the teacher wouldn’t like him so much*”. In that school parents and teachers regarded social diversity and high academic expectations as the main unique characteristics of that school. During role-play it



appeared that the boys regarded these as some of the reasons that may lead to bullying behaviour at school.

Finally, one boy living in the refugee campus stated that the bully might act in that way because that day he was very sad. *“Maybe his father had hit him that morning and he was so sad.....he didn’t really want to harm the other child”*.

This boy was physically abused by his father many times and had discussed with his teacher about displacement of violence. During role-play he did not present any reservations in projecting his own experience.

### **c) Alternative ways to deal with aggression**

The boys were asked whether the bully could talk to someone about the incident and how he was feeling. Three of the boys mentioned that the bully could not talk to anybody. As one boy said: *“His parents and teachers would tell him off and his friends would laugh at him as they would say: ‘look at him! he feels guilty now!’, besides the bully is a tough guy...he can never show his real feelings”*. It seems that for these boys suppression of feelings could be seen as an alternative and necessary way for the bully to deal with his anger.

Four of the boys believed that despite difficulties the bully should talk with his victim and clear things up. This would be the only way to gain his friendship again and show that he is not a bad character. However, according to most of the boys, he should apologise to him privately and not in front of the teacher or the rest of the class in order to avoid humiliation. Or if he is going to apologise in public, one of the boys mentioned that he should first talk with his friends and

legitimate his actions so they would not regard his apology as a sign of weakness. In addition, two of the boys believed that the bully should talk to his parents about the incident, but as one of the boys said “ *he should tell them that the victim did something to him before in order to avoid punishment*”. However, according to this boy, he could not say that to the teacher because the rest of the children saw the scene and they could reveal the truth. Actually, the boys did not mention the teacher as a person the bully could talk to since “*he/she may be very strict and punish him (the bully) again if he tried to talk out the incident with him/her*”.

Finally, one of the boys stated that the only reliable person the bully could talk to was him as he could support him and advise him what to do in order not to lose his friends. This boy had no friends at school, he was always on his own and he never talked to anyone about his feelings of being angry or frustrated at school. Even his teacher reported that she could hardly communicate with him. At home he was living with his mother who rarely saw him. Thus, he was actually growing up on his own. This fact led him to think of himself as the only reliable person in his life and made it difficult for him to trust others.

### **2.3.2 Identification with the victim**

In the second part of the role play activity the researcher took the role of the victim and the boys were prompted to identify their selves with the victim. Throughout this procedure the boys who participated in this study talked about the victim’s feelings and their perceptions about him as well as the alternative ways the victim could employ to face his problem.

**a) Victim's feelings**

In boys' replies the most frequently reported feelings of the victim were fear, loneliness, pain, sadness, hatred towards the bully and humiliation. All of the boys believed that the victim had no support from the rest of the children so he could not talk to anyone since nobody could really understand how he was feeling. According to their opinion the rest of the children would certainly support the bully because they would be afraid of him, so the victim would be left alone. As one of the boys stated *"even if he tried to talk to someone he may have to face his aggression since he would definitely support the bully"*. Furthermore, the participants tried to legitimate the victim's loneliness by attributing the blame to him. *"Kostas (the victim) was the reason Nikos (the bully) was punished"*, a boy stated, *"and because of this Kostas was reluctant to talk to someone about his problem. Thus, everybody will blame Kostas about Niko's punishment unless he explains to them that he didn't want to accuse him to the teacher. Otherwise he will be alone. Nobody would ever talk to him"*.

In addition, one of the boys said that the victim would never forget what happened to him because he was deeply hurt. Thus, it would be impossible for him to accept the bully's apology, although one of the boys insisted that the victim should ask for an apology on behalf of the bully. The longitudinal character of bullying was also asserted by most of the boys as a factor that led the victim to despair. Talking about it one of the boys stated very emphatically: *"Nikos (the bully) tried so many times to humiliate Kostas (the victim), and the other children laughed at him so many times that he feels very embarrassed to talk to them about his problem"*.

The victim's feelings and the longitudinal character of bullying were, according to the boys, the main factors that affected the victim's self esteem and self-perception. Most of the boys asserted the thesis that the victim feels useless and weak to defend himself since he has no strength to stand up for himself and resist. He can hardly trust himself since everybody was underestimating him and laughing at him.

Two of the boys looked at the two main characters of the role-play in a critical manner trying to compare the feelings of the victim and the bully. Thus, they came to the conclusion that they both feel the same way. As a boy said "*they both feel sad for different reasons. The victim feels sad because he was humiliated by the bully and the bully feels sad because he was humiliated by the teacher since he was punished*". The second boy believed that they both feel hatred for each other but they express their feelings in different ways "*Nikos wants to hit Kostas, whereas Kostas doesn't like fights. He is just defending himself against evil*". This boy also affirmed his own perception about the victim by stating "*He needs help. I would certainly become his friend. I would tell him to believe and trust himself. I would tell him to do whatever he likes and not to be afraid of other people.... he has to believe that he can make it*". Interestingly, this boy, according to his parents has been a victim of bullying many a times. Thus, they were trying to enhance his positive self-perception in various ways by telling him that he has to believe in himself. Being involved in this role-play activity this boy was transferring what he has been listening to from his parents, identifying himself with the victim.

**b) Alternative ways to deal with the problem**

By the middle of the second part of the role-play activity the participants were manifesting that the victim was in despair and could not find a way out of his problem. At that point they were prompted to think of any alternative ways the victim could employ in order to deal with his problem. Two of the boys suggested that the victim should talk to the bully and discuss the problem with him and tell him to stop annoying him. However, they both agreed that this would not be easy because of the feelings of hatred between them and the bully's toughness.

In addition, one of the boys also believed that the victim should try to make friends with the bully in order not to give him a reason to bully him again. He has to try to be positive to him and show that he also supports him.

Generally, it seems that these boys saw suppression of anger on behalf of the victim as the only way to deal with the problem. Nevertheless, they also realised how difficult this would be for the victim without any help from someone outside the interpersonal relationship between the bully and the victim. Thus, they were asked to think of any persons the victim could talk to about his feelings and perceptions after the incident.

Only three of the boys replied that the victim should talk to both his parents and teacher. The rest of the boys gave a variety of replies according to their own experience in their relationship with the significant others in their life. One of the boys who had been continually abused by his father said that the victim could

talk only with his grandparents and his teacher, since the boy's grandparents were his shelter when his father got angry with him. In addition, this boy seemed to have a very close relationship with his teacher as she knew about his problem and he often discussed this with her. Furthermore, the boy who believed that the bully could only talk to him about his problem asserted the same opinion about the victim for the same reasons. He said that there was nobody at school the victim could trust and that he was the only person who could help him. The same assumption was also manifested from the boy from Russia. He believed that there was nobody at school the victim could trust so he can only speak to his family. This boy stressed very emphatically that the victim should not talk to his teacher because if he complained to him he would not believe him as *"the bully should deny what he did or he could say that the victim had said something bad for him before and then the victim couldn't prove that this was a lie. Even if the victim tells the teacher that he can't resist the bully's strength he would be humiliated and the rest would laugh at him"*. This boy, according to his teacher, did not communicate effectively with her at school not only because of language difficulties but because he did not want to. Actually, his teacher knew nothing about him except for his language problems. Moreover, another boy presented the thesis that the victim should not talk to the teacher. *"When Nikos annoyed him most of the times the teacher wasn't there. So Kostas has to say a reason to the teacher why this had happened to him, so that the teacher would be able to punish Nikos for a particular reason. Thus, the victim has to talk with the bully first"*. Feeling humiliated and sad was not enough to complain, according to this boy who brought into the discussion the issue of trust towards the teacher.

In addition, one of the boys said that the victim should try to solve the problem on his own and not try to involve any adults in the process since this would make things more complicated. This boy also believed that the victim should not talk to his parents about it since they would be very sad. The same attitude was also adopted by another boy whose parents were very much worried about his self-esteem. He said that the victim should not talk to his parents about that because they could get angry towards him for not being able to stand up for himself.

Finally, one of the boys stated that the victim should talk to the teacher, the head teacher, his parents and even the bully's parents. However, he admitted that the bully's parents would never trust him and they would support their child, but the rest of the significant adults would believe him because they knew him very well. He ended up saying that the victims' parents should deal with the problem by talking to the bully's parents and asking them to advise their child not to annoy other children. In this way he was transferring the responsibility of dealing with the problem to another context involving adults and expecting the parents to deal with it. This attitude seemed to defuse the victim's tension to deal directly with the problem.

Generally, it seemed that the boys appeared to project their personal experience either as bullies or as victims to the characters presented in the role-play. They were repeating their parents' and teachers' perceptions about them, they were talking about their own story as abused children or socially isolated children. Their tendency to "see" themselves in the characters of the role-play could be regarded as an indication that bullies bring their personal history in any

aggressive act they initiate or have to face. This assumption could reinforce the multi-factor character of bullying, since the bully's frustrations, expectations, perceptions, feelings and uniqueness seem to be part of his actions against another child. In this way, bullying can be seen as a personal problem.

## **2.4 Olweus' Q-inventory**

Table 6 presents the mean values of the participants' responses for aggression given in the Q-inventory (see p. 114). Each figure represents the mean of scores of items 3, 5, 6, 9, 14, 18, 22, 26, 31, 32, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44, 51, 55, 57 for each bully, as rated by himself, his parents and his teacher, followed by the mean scores as rated by the control pupils and their parents.

Three main comparisons were undertaken: a comparison of the bullies' parents' and control parents' responses on aggression; a comparison between the bullies' parents' and the teachers' responses; and a comparison between the bullies' and the control pupils' responses

**Table 6: The mean values of the participants' responses for aggression given in the Q- inventory (scale 1-7).**

	Participants								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Bullies</b>	4.11	3.95	3.37	3.67	4.11	4.32	2.79	4.05	5.26
<b>Bullies' Parents</b>	4.63	4.47	4.42	3.74	3.84	4.21	3.47	3.42	4.11
<b>Teachers</b>	4.37	4.78	3.74	3.68	4.06	4.32	3.73	3.74	3.94
<b>Control Pupils</b>	3.84	3.68	3.95	3.58	3.68	3.53	3.30	3.70	1.90
<b>Control Parents</b>	3.74	3.63	2.72	3.26	3.53	3.11	2.79	3.58	2.37



The statistical test employed for the three comparisons was the Mann-Whitney Test. The selection of this statistical test was made for two main reasons. Firstly, the two groups compared in each case constituted two independent groups. Secondly, the measure of children's aggression in the Q-inventory was done by an ordinal scale (rating scale) and the requirements for parametric statistics could not be assumed.

The selected level of significance for the three comparisons was  $\alpha = .05$  and since the direction of the difference was not predicted a two-tailed test was employed.

**a) Comparison of the parents' and control parents' responses on their children's aggression**

The observed value of U in this comparison was  $U=8.5$  which is less than the critical value given for U for a two-tailed test at  $\alpha = .05$  when  $n_1=9$  and  $n_2=9$  (critical value =17). Thus, the null hypothesis may be rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. That is to say that there is statistical difference between the responses of the bullies parents' and the control parents' referring to aggression in their children.

**b) Comparison of the parents' and the teachers' responses on bullies' aggression**

The observed value of U for this comparison was  $U= 38$ . This value is more than the critical value given for a U for a two-tailed test at  $\alpha = .05$  when  $n_1=9$  and  $n_2=9$ . Thus, in this comparison the null hypothesis could not be rejected. In other

words, there does not seem to be any statistically significant difference between the parents' and the teachers' responses regarding bullies' aggression.

**c) Comparison of the bullies' and the control pupils' responses on their aggression**

The observed value of  $U$  in the comparison of the responses of the bullies' and the control pupils was  $U = 20,5$ . As in the second comparison this  $U$  value is more than the critical value given for a two-tailed test at  $\alpha = .05$ , when  $n_1 = 9$  and  $n_2 = 9$ . So, in this case the null hypothesis could not be rejected. This implies that there was not any statistically significant difference between the bullies' and the control pupils' responses referring to their aggression on the Q- inventory.

## **2.5 The Self Image Profile for Children (SIP-C)**

The results of the SIP-C will refer to the boys' Self-Image positive (SI+ve), the boys' Self-Image negative (SI-ve), their Self-Esteem (SE) in relation to the mean scale scores and standard deviations by age for males on the test standardisation ( $N=513$ ) (Butler, 2001). In addition, they will be considered in relation to the 'Aspects of Self' included in this test.

As mentioned in the methodology section the children were first prompted to rate their 'Actual Self' by indicating 'How I am' against each of the 25 items using a 0-6 Likert type scales. The positive self image (SI+ve) score is the sum of scores on items 1-12 (range 0-72), the negative self image (SI-ve) score is the sum of scores on items 14-25 (range 0-72) and the self esteem score (SE) is the sum of discrepancy scores on items 1-25. The discrepancy between 'How I am' and

‘How I would like to be’ scores, provides an estimate of self-esteem (Butler and Green, 1998; Harter, 1999). A statistical comparison with the standardisation data using the t-test was rejected given the small number of the sample.

Table 7 presents the mean values and standard deviations for the nine boys that participated in this study and the corresponding values of the test standardisation. The mean value of SI+ve for the nine boys is higher than the corresponding value of test standardisation. The standard deviation for SI+ve for the nine boys is lower than the standard deviation of the standardisation sample, which implies a greater consistency in their perception about their positive self-image. In addition, there is a notable difference between the mean value of SI-ve for the nine boys and the respective value for the standardisation sample.

**Table 7: Mean values and standard deviations for the nine boys and for the standardisation sample**

	<b>Sample</b>		<b>Standardisation</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<sup>1</sup> <b>SI+ve</b>	59	6.3	53.4	9.1
<b>SI-ve</b>	41.1	16.1	25.4	13.1
<b>SE</b>	54.1	8.5	33.5	20.8

This implies that the nine boys showed a high level of negative self-image in relation to the standardisation sample. The standard deviation for the nine boys is also higher than that of the standardised sample. The boys who experienced or

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<sup>1</sup> **SI +ve:** Self Image positive  
**SI -ve:** Self Image negative  
**SE:** Self esteem

witnessed physical violence in their homes scored higher than the rest of the boys in this variable. The high SE discrepancy score (54.1 compared with 33.5) implies a lower self-esteem for the nine boys. The standard deviation for SE is much lower for the nine boys and this indicates that the spread of their answers in this domain is small. In respect to their scores on the SI+ve and SI-ve scale these boys seem to get high scores on both scales. A possible reason for this could be their attempt to show a positive self-image to the researcher, since by the time this test was given to them the boys had spent enough time with the researcher and had already sustained a positive relationship with her. Another reason may be their denial of their label as ‘the bad’ boys in the class given to them by their teachers and classmates. Having experienced a positive attitude on behalf of the researcher towards them, they may not want to challenge the good impression the researcher seemed to have about them.

Table 8 (p. 259) presents the mean scores and standard deviations for the seven ‘Aspects of Self’ included in this test for the nine boys and for the standardisation sample. “Behaviour” consists of 8 items (items 14,16,17,19,20,21,23,24) and appears to estimate the child’s engagement in behaviour that may be considered as inappropriate. On this variable the nine boys scored higher overall than the standardisation sample indicating that the boys believed that their behaviour was often inappropriate. The standard deviation of their scores is lower than that of the standardisation sample, which implies a congruency in their perceptions about their behaviour. Inspection of the individual scores suggests that Pupils 1,2 and 3 who lived in the campus believed that they were engaged in inappropriate behaviour more than the rest of the boys

who participated in this study. However, in relation to the other scores on this test and especially with their scores on components with a positive impact e.g. social, the nine boys scored much lower on this variable.

**Table 8: Mean scores and standard deviations for seven ‘Aspects of Self’ for the nine boys and for the standardisation sample**

	Sample		Standardisation	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Behaviour</b>	3.4	1.3	2.4	1.6
<b>Social</b>	4.8	0.5	4.0	1.1
<b>Emotional</b>	3.3	1.2	1.4	1.2
<b>Outgoing</b>	5.1	0.8	5.1	0.8
<b>Academic</b>	4.8	0.7	4.1	1.7
<b>Resourceful</b>	3.4	1.8	3.0	2.3
<b>Appearance</b>	4.7	1.1	3.8	2.2

The ‘Social’ aspect of self, which consists of six items (items 1,2,3,5,8,11) , tends to reflect a friendliness, kindness and sensitivity towards others coupled with helpfulness and moral aspect of honesty. As in the ‘Behaviour’ component, the nine boys scored higher than the standardisation sample and the standard deviation of their scores is lower than that of the standardisation sample. This is one of the highest scores the boys achieved on this test which couples with the high score in SI+ve reported in Table 7 suggesting that the boys saw themselves as very positive and open persons in their relationship with others.

‘Emotional’ aspect is concerned with the child’s sense of vulnerability coupled with a sense of isolation or difference from others and includes four items (items 13,15,18,22). It also has a social aspect but fundamentally reflects the child’s affective reaction in relationship with others. The difference between the boys’

scores on this component and the standardisation score is notable since the boys scored much higher than the standardisation sample meaning that the bullies may feel 'labelled' by the significant others in their environment. These results may agree with the high scores in the SI-ve scale presented by the boys.

The 'Outgoing' aspect (items 4,7,9) is concerned with sporting ability but also with a sense of liveliness and humour. There is no difference between the boys' score and the score of the standardisation sample in this 'aspect of self'. The same applies for the standard deviations of the two samples. This value is the highest the boys recorded, in relation to their scores on the other parameters. They seemed to perceive themselves as very athletic, especially the boys who lived in the campus.

In the 'Academic' domain (items 6,10) the boys presented a higher mean score but lower standard deviation than the children of the standardisation sample. Documentary analysis and participant observation in this study revealed that not all the boys presented high academic performance. Most of them could hardly follow the average standard of their class. However, all the boys perceived themselves as having high academic performance. Their perception of their academic attendance was related to the academic standards of each school and their teachers' expectations. Despite the fact that the academic standards and the teachers' expectations differed in each school, all the teachers mentioned that they were deliberately rewarding the boys' effort in the classroom in order to enhance their academic image and to hinder stigmatisation. In addition, as the boys mentioned while they were doing the test, their perception about "being a good pupil", was an important factor that enhanced their positive self-image and

contributed to the development of their self-esteem. In this way, their high score in the academic component confirms their idea about their positive self-image and self-esteem presented in Table 7 (see p. 257).

Moreover, looking at the self-aspect of 'resourceful', which consisted of the item 25 the nine boys scored higher than the standardisation sample and the standard deviation of their scores were lower than the scores of standard deviation of the standardisation sample. Their reply on this component could imply that the boys lose their interest very easily in what happens around them and can hardly find a meaning in what they are doing or in what they are told to do. Finally, all the boys seemed to be happy with their appearance, since they scored higher than the standardisation sample in the 'appearance' component (item 12) whereas the standard deviation of their scores is lower. This indicates another area with a positive impact in which the boys scored high and there is consistency in their replies. It can also be regarded in relation with the fact that most of the boys were bigger than other children in their age. This fact enabled them to use their body to dominate the private space of other children and "assert their authority" in public. In addition, these results couple with the high scores the boys presented in athletic domain since their physical condition helped them to win in athletic activities. Nevertheless, since the last two variables consisted of only one item care must be taken in interpreting the results from this sample.

## **2.6 The Harter Self-perception Profile for Children (SPPC)**

Table 9 (see p. 264) presents the subscale means and standard deviations of the scores on the SPPC of the nine boys who participated in this project and the correspondent values of the standardisation sample.

‘Scholastic Competence’ is the domain related to the way a child sees their school attendance and scholastic achievement. The mean score of the nine boys in this domain is almost equal to that of the standardisation sample, as is the standard deviation. These results agree with the results of the Academic domain in the SIP-C test.

Social Acceptance refers to the degree a child is accepted by peers or feels popular. The mean value of the scores of the nine boys is slightly higher and the standard deviation is lower for the nine boys than for the standardisation sample. This confirms the consistency in their perception about the degree of social acceptance they experienced at school. It seems that the boys felt that they were socially accepted since they realised that they had supporters at school who perceived them as their leaders. According to the SIP-C manual (Butler, 2001) the corresponding SIP-C domain for SPPC ‘Social Acceptance’ is the ‘Emotional’ domain. However, the results in those two domains seem to be contradictory as in the latter boys scored higher than the standardisation sample in the same test. This may be due to the different way the items in the two different tests were formulated. The items of the ‘Emotional’ domain in the SIP-C test had mainly a negative meaning e.g. often punished, get angry very easily etc. Moreover, all the boys perceived the item ‘different from others’ as ‘isolated



from others'. In this way, in the SIP-C test the boys seemed to feel labelled whereas in the SPPC test they seemed to feel socially accepted.

The Athletic Competence domain is relevant to sports and outdoor games. The score of the nine boys is essentially the same as the score of the standardisation sample in this domain. It can also be coupled with the boys' results in the corresponding 'Outgoing' domain of the SIP-C. However, there is a wider spread of their scores which may be due to the fact that the boys in the campus scored much higher than the rest of the boys in this component. They presented high scores in athletic competence (higher than in scholastic competence). They seemed to spend more time dealing with athletics not only at school but during the afternoon at home as well. In this domain they could prove their strength and sustain their positive self-image. Pupil 4 and Pupil 6 presented the highest scores on this variable. This fact enhanced the competition between them. Pupil 5 presented the lowest score on this domain. A possible reason for this could be that this boy had problems in coordinating with the rest of the team, so he was not very popular among his classmates during the games.

In addition, inspection of the individualised scores and observations suggested that the boys' perceptions about their social acceptance and athletic competence seemed to be interrelated in this test. Being popular in games seemed to be related to the boys' idea about their competence in athletics and outdoor games. Boys 7 and 9 scored lower than Pupil 8 in the same school. Doing participant observation I realised that their scores were related to their popularity in their peer group during the games. Pupil 7 was more obese than the rest of the boys and this affected his athletic performance. In addition, he was very frequently

punished at school because he used physical violence towards other children during the games. Pupil 9 was always playing alone. He did not want to play in a team but he never gave a reason for this. His parents believed that in the past he had been bullied during athletic games and now he was afraid to get to the team again.

Physical appearance taps the degree to which the boys are happy with the way they look, like their height, weight, body, face, hair and feel that they are good-looking. The nine boys scored slightly higher than the standardisation sample and the standard deviation of their scores was also higher. These results agree with the boys' scores in the SIP-C test regarding the 'Appearance' domain. Physical diversity seemed to play a role in the spread of the boys' scores, since all of the boys got high scores in this domain except from Pupil 3 and Pupil 7. Pupil 3 was physically weaker than his classmates whereas Pupil 7 was more obese than his classmates.

**Table 9: Subscale means and standard deviations on the SPPC of the nine boys and the standardisation sample**

	Sample		Standardisation	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Scholastic Competence</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>0.62</b>
<b>Social Acceptance</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>0.63</b>
<b>Athletic Competence</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>0.65</b>
<b>Physical Appearance</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>0.65</b>
<b>Behavioural Conduct</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>0.55</b>
<b>Global Self-Worth</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.62</b>

The Behavioural Conduct domain refers to the degree the boys liked the way they behaved, did the right thing, acted the way they were supposed to and avoided getting into trouble. The mean value of the nine boys was lower than the mean value of the standardisation sample. This suggests that the nine boys were not satisfied with the way they behaved and acknowledged that they often get into trouble because of their behaviour. Their results in the SPPC agree with their results in the 'Behaviour' SIP-C. The lower standard deviation for the nine boys, implies a consistency in their answers. Pupils 6 and 7 presented the highest and the lowest score in this domain respectively. Although at the time the SPPC was given to them both of them were punished in their schools for being physically aggressive towards other children, their perception about their behaviour was very different. This may be due to their different family backgrounds. In Pupil 6's family using physical violence was acceptable. However, despite the fact that Pupil 7 also witnessed physical violence at home, he knew that that kind of behaviour was not acceptable. Pupils 1 and 9 also had a high score in this domain. Again parents' attitude towards the boys' behaviour seemed to play a role in the development of their perception about their behaviour. Pupil 1 was living in a home where violence was embedded in their family life, thus it was legitimated and accepted, although at school resulted in punishment. Pupil 9, according to his parents, had low self esteem, so they tried hard to enhance his self esteem by saying to him that 'he had done the right thing' even if he had not. Their attitude towards their child resulted in letting him believe that his behaviour was always right. Pupils 5 and 8 had high scores in this domain. Again, a possible reason for this was their parents' attitude towards them. Pupil 5 was an adopted child and his parents did their utmost to enhance his self-esteem,

especially when his sister was born, by telling him how good and right he was. As his mother said, they were doing this to prevent his jealousy towards his sister. In addition, Pupil 8's father reported that he let him win all the games they were playing together in order to make him feel good about himself.

Furthermore, Pupils 2 and 4 have lower scores than Pupils 1 and 9. A possible reason for this is the fact that the day the SPPC was given to Pupil 4 he was punished for physically and verbally bullying other children at school. Again, punishment seemed to affect the boys' perception about their behaviour. The same reason could be manifested for Pupil 2. However, his relationship with his mother could also be seen as playing a role in the development of his attitude towards his behaviour. His mother seemed to project on him her guilt and regrets and was telling him that 'he was never doing the right thing for her'. Her opinion about his son's behaviour was probably assimilated by him and affected his perception about his behaviour.

Finally, Global Self-Worth was the last domain investigated in the SPPC and referred to the boys' general sense of happiness with the way they were leading their life. The boys achieved the highest score on this test which was also higher than the score of the standardisation sample. This indicates that the nine boys believe that they are successful in domains deemed important (e.g. social acceptance and athletic competence). Their scores also imply that they realise a degree of social support from their friends and classmates. Again, the standard deviation of their scores is lower than the standard deviation of the standardisation sample. However, despite the consistency in the boys' answers in this domain the differences in their scores could reveal the role of the experience

of physical violence in the boys' formation of their Global Self-Worth. Pupils 4 and 9 and pupils 5 and 8 had high scores in this domain. However, Pupils 1,2,3,6 and 7 had lower scores. Their scores agreed with their results in the SIP-C test since in the SIP-C the same boys scored higher than the rest in the SI-ve variable. Thus, it seems that boys who experienced or witnessed physical violence at home tended to be less satisfied with the way they were leading their life. In addition, Pupils 1,2 and 3 were also living in a refugee campus. This fact possibly affected their Global Self-worth since they had to face other problems like poverty and social isolation. Finally, Pupil 6 scored low in this component. The fact that he was coming from an ethnic minority may affect the way he was seeing himself as a "stranger" in his environment.

## **2.7 General Cognitive Ability**

The results of the nine boys on the WISC- III are presented in Table 10. It is apparent that there is a wide range of I.Q. scores implying a variety of cognitive abilities presented by the bullies who participated in this study.

**Table 10: WISC-III IQ scores of the nine bullies**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Verbal I.Q.</b>	66	80	75	125	92	75	87	121	100
<b>Performance I.Q.</b>	60	77	62	119	56	75	96	104	107
<b>Full I.Q.</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>104</b>

Moreover, the mean score for the boys' full scale I.Q. is 86 which is almost one standard deviation below the standardization mean. This value classifies the boys in the low average group. There was a greater degree of spread (SD=23.8) than the standardization, where SD=15. This supports the idea that the level of

cognitive development cannot determine the existence or inhibition of bullying behaviour in children.

### **Comparison between Verbal and Performance I.Q.**

The comparison between verbal and performance I.Q. was examined by the use of the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed ranks test. The reason for using this test lies in that the sample is small ( $N=9$ ) so the requirement of parametric statistics could not be assumed and the analysis compares two scores from the WISC III (Verbal v Performance scales) produced by the same children (related sample). This test can tell which member of a pair is 'greater than' which and rank the differences in order of absolute size.

Only Pupil 7 and Pupil 9 showed differences in the direction of higher Performance I.Q. Pupil 6 was dropped from the analysis as he did not present any difference between Verbal and Performance I.Q. The smaller sum of like-signed ranks ( $T$ ) was 9. This value ( $T=9$ ) was bigger than the critical value of  $T$  ( $T=4$ ) given in the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed ranks test for  $N=8$  for the .05 level of significance in a two tailed test.

Thus, the rejection of the null hypothesis is not justified. In other words, there is no statistically significant difference between verbal and performance I.Q. in the sample of the nine boys who participated in this study. Taking into account this analysis of cognitive ability using the WISC III, it is evident that there is no obvious factor concerned with general cognitive ability, or with more specific cognitive domains (verbal, performance). On the contrary the nine bullies,

although having general cognitive ability about 1 SD below mean, were characterised by a spread of scores (58-125).

## **2.8 Personal Constructs**

The use of personal constructs with the nine bullies raised a variety of difficulties. Throughout the procedure the boys did not seem to be able to deal with any kind of abstractions or to do any comparisons between the significant others in their life. Thus, they felt very stressed and said that they did not want to go on with this activity. For these reasons no reliable results were derived from this stage of the project.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

*“ We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.”*

*T.S. Eliot, (“Four Quartets”)*

This study was based on The Proposed Model of Aggression (see Figure 1, p.80) which was built up on the basis of the theoretical review and in order to enable the empirical investigation of the research questions of this study. Thus, its targets were to find out whether bullying could be considered as a form of aggression, to examine the situation in state Greek Cypriot Primary schools in Cyprus and to enable a systematic investigation of the bully’s personality and social normality in Cyprus through its empirical aspect. The model included the different independent variables which give a multidimensional character to aggressive behaviour and which have become the focus of inquiry of many different human sciences. In addition, it led to a technical division of the various factors that contribute to the development of an aggressive act providing in this way a conceptual framework for the investigation of the phenomenon under study. In every part of the empirical aspect of the model the relevant theory was employed in order to examine the particular case.

Since the focus of this study was on the bully the model was used to examine the factors that affect the bully’s actions. This led to the development of the Model of Empirical Work (Figure 2, p.86). According to the Model of Empirical Work the research part was undertaken in two main phases. Phase 1 was accomplished during the academic years 2000-2002, after the first literature review on



aggression and bullying, and comprised five steps (see p.86). Its general aim was the selection of the nine case studies. Phase 2 was accomplished after the selection of case studies and consisted of twelve steps (see p.87). The general aim of this Phase was the investigation of the nine case studies.

During Phase 2 of the empirical work an attempt was made to investigate the bullies' physiology, intentions and actions, as they were manifested in the Proposed Model of Aggression (Figure 1, p.80). The bully's physiology was investigated by means of documentary analysis and parents' interviews. However, the bullies' intentions and actions could not be investigated in isolation from each other and by means of a single instrument since they were referred to by all the participants (parents, teachers and pupils) and throughout the different ways of investigation that were used in this study. Consequently, these two variables included the investigation of the ethological, psychological and sociological factors that play a role in the development of an aggressive act and their examination would be an effort to give an answer to the subsequent questions that were raised throughout the process of the theoretical review. This chapter will include the possible answers to these questions according to the results of this study, an examination of the models that were used throughout this study, some suggestions for further intervention and the manifestation of certain limitations.

### **5.1. The questions raised in the theoretical review:**

The theoretical review of the literature on aggression revealed a number of questions which determined the research questions of this study regarding the various factors that may contribute to the development of an aggressive act.

#### **5.1.1 The physiology of the aggressor**

With respect to the physiology of the aggressor two questions were raised during the theoretical review in this project: Does the physiology of the bully play a role in the development of aggression? To what extent and in what ways does this happen? Documentary analysis did not reveal any physiological problems for the nine boys who participated in this study. In addition, the boys' parents did not refer to any specific physiological problem regarding their child, although they consider possible health problems as a matter of major concern for them as parents. Nevertheless, owing to issues of confidentiality parents could not easily give such information. Moreover, the examination of hormone levels and genetic factors could not be initiated within the limits of this study. Only in two cases did parents refer to heredity and the administration of anaesthetic during an operation as possible explanations of their child's aggressiveness but without any evidence. Thus, while there is evidence that the physiology of the bully can play a role in the development of bullying behaviour when the person's physiological functions enable the appearance of such behaviour (Clifford et al., 1998; Deckel and Fuqua, 1998; Duan et al., 1996; Ferris et al., 1999; Tremblay et al. 1998; Moyer, 1976), the present study did not provide any evidence in support of this issue. On the other hand, the lack of direct evidence of physiological problems did not hinder the appearance of bullying behaviour.

### **5.1.2 The intentions and the actions of the aggressor**

As stated above the bullies' intentions and actions could not be investigated in isolation from each other and, in addition, they required the investigation of the ethological, psychological and sociological factors that play a role in the development of an aggressive act.

#### **a) Ethological factors**

Regarding the intentions and actions of the aggressor, there were several questions raised in the review of the ethological factors of aggression. To start with, are the intentions of the bully due to an innate aggressive drive? Throughout this study it became apparent that the bullies' intentions were related to a variety of psychosocial factors and that the assumption of an innate tendency (Lorenz, 1966) as the cause of aggression in children was only employed to support the denial of the dysfunction of these factors either by parents or by teachers. It seems that the bullies who participated in this study presented aggressive behaviour for certain reasons associated with their relationship with the people around them and with the way bullies perceived their selves.

This gives an answer to whether bullying in schools is associated with the maintenance of social hierarchy in the classroom and with gender roles. Participant observation and information from parents and teachers support the idea that bullying behaviour, as it is expressed in the school setting, is associated with the maintenance of social hierarchy (Lorenz, 1964) in the classroom and with gender roles. Bullying takes place when pupils want to attract attention, to defend their friends and supporters, when someone teases them, when they are

not adjusted to the habits of their peer group, and when they have language difficulties that prevent them communicating effectively with others. Gender plays a role in the way bullies attempt to sustain their social status in the class. Sociometric technique initiated within the course of this study revealed that boys seemed to employ physical bullying whereas girls employ indirect ways of bullying. These findings support those of international research on bullying (Baldry, 1998; Borg, 1999; Boulton, 1993; Charlton et al., 1998; Fabre-Cornali et. al., 1999; Ortega and Mora-Merchan, 1999; Pateraki and Houndoumadi, 2001). Since bullying is mainly understood by teachers and pupils as 'physical aggression', this could be considered as the main reason that teachers and pupils in this study did not nominate any girls as bullies. However, during the sociometric technique and interviews both teachers and pupils referred to incidents of indirect bullying initiated by girls with the same aim: to sustain social hierarchy in the classroom by forming cliques and seeking to monopolise popularity and attention.

The observation of the different ways boys expressed aggressive behaviour led to the investigation of the expression of threat behaviour in an act of bullying. So, how is threat expressed within the course of an aggressive act in the school setting? The development of threat behaviour (Cooper et al., 2003; Karavanich and Atema, 1998; Mirza and Chivers, 2002; Preuschoft et al., 1998; Wisenden, 2002) was expressed differently in boys according to their physical conditions. Boys who were physically bigger and stronger than their classmates employed eye contact and body gestures to assert their authority. Smaller boys formed cliques to balance their power with that of their physically stronger opponent.

The employment of physical bullying by boys seemed to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of their dominance or popularity. These results agree with the results of other studies conducted in other countries (For a review see Xie et al., 2003).

Another issue considered in the relevant literature was the redirection of aggression. Can bullies redirect their anger to something or to someone else in order to sustain a relationship that is so vital to them? The issue of redirection of aggression was also associated with the use of defence mechanisms in psychoanalytic discussion about aggression and especially with the use of displacement (Freud 1936a, 1936b; Hollway, 1999; Klein, 1926, 1955; Parker, 1995). If aggression is a destructive innate force in human nature, then how is it transformed by means of different defence mechanisms in the expression of bullying behaviour in children? In most cases boys who participated in this study employed displacement and projection to deal with their anger in their relationship with their parents. Especially, pupils 1,2,6 and 7 who experienced or witnessed physical violence at home seemed to transfer their anger into the school environment in order to sustain their relationship with their parents at home. During role-play they referred to the relationship of the 'bully' with his parents and implied that this would be a reason for expressing bullying behaviour at school by transferring his anger into the school environment. In the same way, those who experienced lack of attention from their mother at home desperately and aggressively sought attention in their relationship with their teacher especially if their teacher was a woman. This was more apparent with pupils 1 and 2 who were living in the refugee campus. Their teacher reported that her

main problem was that they were continually seeking for her attention in a competitive way but she could not give attention to both of them at the same time. Therefore, it seems that displacement and projection are employed by the bullies in order to deal effectively with their aggression and not as a way to transform a destructive innate aggressive force. Since they do not want to destroy a relationship that is vital to them (e.g. their relationship with their parents) they redirect their aggression to an environment that is more 'safe' for them.

Finally, can a child become aggressive in their environment in order to survive? Children can become aggressive in order to sustain their vital space in their physical or psychological environment (Lorenz, 1964). The nine boys who participated in this study became angry at home when they wanted to get their parents' attention, when they were criticised by other family members, when they wanted to be rewarded, when they were teased by their siblings, or when their siblings did not resign to their manipulation, when they felt that someone was unfair to them and when they wanted to get things under control. Seven out of the nine boys were reported by their parents to direct their aggression to their siblings. In addition, in Primary 2 and Primary 3 where the schoolyard was very small children were crowded and could hardly find enough space to play. This fact seemed to increase their aggressiveness since they did not have enough space to diffuse their tension during break time. The children in Primary 1 faced this problem at home since they have to live in small flats without any privacy.

In conclusion, these manifestations of possible answers to the ethological questions about aggression imply a sense of intention that is included in the initiation of the bullying act for particular reasons. In one way or the other bullies

intend to inflict harm on someone that they perceive as threatening their private space or to obtain something that they lack in their relationship with the significant adults in their life.

### **b) Psychological and Social factors**

The manifestation of the second research question in this study, that is the exploration of some of the variables of the Proposed Model of Aggression by an empirical study of bullying behaviour in Greek Cypriot State Primary schools focusing on the bully's psychological characteristics and social environment, led to the investigation of psychological and social factors related to aggression.

### **Bullies' relationship with their mother**

With respect to the relationship of the bullies with the significant others in their lives, their relationship with their mothers appeared in this study to play a crucial role in the development of bullying. But to what extent does the mother-child relationship affect the development of bullying behaviour in children? Pupils 2, 3, 6 and 7 who participated in this study experienced negativity or rejection on behalf of their mother. This was manifested by their parents during the interviews and confirmed by their teachers, even the boys themselves during the process of the study. According to the research journal rejection by mother was especially obvious in the case of Pupil 2 when the researcher visited him in his home after he had an operation. These boys seemed trapped in their mothers' expectations to be different from what they were and so they experienced their mothers' attitude towards them as a rejection of themselves. These results agree

with the psychoanalytic theories on the relation of aggression and rejection by the mother (Freud, 1955; Klein, 1946; 1956; 1928).

Moreover, during the interviews it was apparent that their mothers expected them to fulfil the gap in their relationship with their husbands. They also expected them to understand their needs as neglected partners, ignoring their boys' psychological needs as children. In addition their mothers' attitude led to a mutual dependence between bully and mother especially in the case of Pupils 1, 2 and 7 when the father was absent physically or psychologically. In those cases the mother's attitude often forced the bully to think and to behave as an adult, raising in this way his tension and aggressiveness. However, the results suggest a more complex scenario for the boys who experienced or witnessed physical violence against their mother. Pupils 1,2,6 and 7 seemed to develop a stronger relationship with their mothers. In the parents' interviews it became obvious that this relationship was mutual. In those cases rejection or negativity on behalf of the mother led boys to frustration, since they felt rejected by a person they seemed to protect and love very much. They also seemed to experience internal contradiction of feelings between their mothers' negativity and their positive feelings towards their mother. These findings also give a possible answer to the question whether frustration contributes to the development of bullying behaviour in children, since their aggression can be seen as a reaction to this frustration according to the frustration-aggression hypothesis, which was introduced by Dollard and his associates (1939).



### **The role of punishment**

Punishment was a crucial component in the bully-parent relationship. So, what is the role of punishment in the inhibition or reinforcement of aggression? Firstly, parents expressed their stereotypes regarding punishment by asserting that the attribution of punishment is part of their parental role. They even accepted the fact that physical punishment can be legitimated if carried out by the parents. Parents of the bullies employed punishment along with advice, discussion and combinations of these three actions to deal with the bullies' behaviour. In terms of punishment parents used physical, psychological punishment and threat to inhibit their children's aggressiveness. The attribution of physical punishment was strongly related to negative parent-child relationships (Kanoy et al., 2003) and increased the boys' aggressiveness (Ateah et al., 2003; Berkowitz, 1993; Jouriles et al., 1997; Nobes and Smith, 1997; Olweus, 1993; Weiss et al., 1992). However, consistency in the way parents deal with their son's behaviour was very important regarding their effect on their child's behaviour (Nobes and Smith, 1997). If both parents were punishment oriented in their behaviour the boys tended to have a negative perception of their relationship with others (Gomez and Gomez, 2000; Gomez et al. 2001). Boys who were frequently the witnesses of domestic violence also experienced punishment as another form of violence. Furthermore, mothers, who were physically abused by their partners, used physical punishment with their children. These findings support the idea of "intergenerational transmission of violence" as it was introduced by Smith and Wilson (1998). In addition, in order to become effective punishment had to be employed within a framework of a relationship between parents and children. If this relationship was not strong enough or did not exist punishment had no

meaning for children. However, strong relations between a punitive parent and the bully seemed to reinforce vicarious conditioning (Bjorkqvist, 1997) since during participant observation it became apparent that most of the bullies were modelling their parents' behaviour throughout the course of a bullying act. All the boys who experienced or witnessed physical abuse at home presented all kinds of bullying behaviour at school. This in combination with the fact that parents who had experienced physical punishment from their parents, used physical punishment with their children as well supports the intergenerational transmission of corporal punishment (For a review see Malamuth et al., 1991). Nevertheless, the more educated the parents were, the less they used physical punishment.

### **Family Relationships**

In addition, mother-bully relationship was seen in the framework of family relationships. So, in what ways can family system, namely parental, sibling and parent-bully relationships affect the development of bullying behaviour? Family relationships seemed to be strongly influenced by parental stereotypes, parental self-perception, parental expectations, parental relationships, bully's relationship with their parents, parental life satisfaction, sibling relationships, parent's perceptions about the bully and parent's actions.

Firstly, parental stereotypes of their sons, as they were expressed by the parents of the bullies, were related to gender roles, the way youngsters should live their life and the role of punishment. Pupil 7's mother tried to persuade her son not to be so aggressive by presenting to him the idea that aggressive men are not liked

by women. She was probably projecting her own opinion about aggressive men since she was abused by her husband. In addition, Pupil 9's parents believed that today youngsters just take advantage of their parents. This idea seemed to hinder the development of a trusting relationship with their son. Pupil 9 referred to the lack of trust in his relationship with his parents while he was doing the Olweus Q-sort questionnaire.

Secondly, a mother claimed that punishment, even physical punishment, is legitimated as part of "being a parent". In their interviews the rest of the parents seemed to agree with this idea which affected their self-perception making them see themselves as authority people in their relationship with their sons. Moreover, as parents they also admitted a sense of competition in relation to their partner or other parents and two mothers refer to their guilt "of not being the proper parent". Furthermore, parents employed a variety of defense mechanisms to deal with their son's problematic behaviour (e.g. denial, projection, repression and rationalization). All the parents in their interviews denied the fact that their children were bullying others. They rather seemed to believe that their children were reacting as "immature persons" but without any intent to harm others. The parents of Pupil 9 repressed the experience of their visit to a child psychologist in order to talk with her about their child's problematic behaviour. The mother of Pupil 2 believed that her son's aggressive behaviour was due to the lack of attention on behalf of his teacher. In this way she was projecting to the teacher her own guilt of not giving enough attention to his son. Finally, the mother of Pupil 3 employed rationalization by reporting that his son became aggressive after having an operation during which he was given more anesthetic than the

appropriate dose. The employment of defense mechanisms on behalf of the parents, and especially the mothers, hindered the effective communication between the parents and the teachers of the bullies in order to face the boys' problematic behaviour in a consistent way.

Thirdly, parental expectations determined the quality of the parent-bully relationship and were mainly related to the bullies' academic achievement and were higher for the eldest children than for the younger. This assumption was also confirmed by the teachers' replies in their interviews, except from the teacher who worked in the campus. In addition, parental expectations were also affected by the quality of parental relationships. Mothers who experienced physical abuse expected their sons to undertake the role of their partner (Black and Newman, 1996). One common problem that was reported by most women in this study was the fact that they were feeling neglected as spouses and wanted their husband to spend more time with them. However, it was apparent that even if parents reported excellent parental relations bullying behaviour could still occur in children. Moreover, parental relationships with the bully varied according to the parent's psychology and the child's uniqueness. Most parents referred to their relationship with the bully asserting rejection, neglect, dependence, fear and aggression. These factors implied negativity in the parent-bully relationship as it was manifested by Olweus (1993). Only two of the parents reported harmonious relationships with the bullies. Furthermore, despite difficulties most of the parents reported that they were generally satisfied with their lives. Only two of the mothers that were physically abused and lived in the campus seemed in despair.

Relationships were very strong between the bullies and their siblings, especially when children in a family experienced or witnessed physical violence (Dunn and McGuire, 1992; Jenkins and Smith, 1990; Jenkins et al. 1989 (as cited in Newman et al., 1997)). However, in the cases when the bully was the eldest child jealousy was the main characteristic in sibling relationships. This may have to do with the parents' expectations of their eldest children and the lack of consistency in the way parents treat their children (Dunn and Munn, 1986). Furthermore, parents had a very positive perception about the bullies although they admitted they faced a serious problem with their behaviour. This was also apparent in the replies of the bullies' parents in the Olweus Q-inventory. Three of the parents attributed the problem to lack of self-esteem on behalf of the bullies. Parents appeared to have a twofold perception about the bullies and about bullying. Unlike the teachers, they did not seem to identify their sons with their behaviour. They referred to their sons' behaviour as a problem they have to face but they talked about their sons in a positive way. Their twofold perception led to the initiation of different actions under different circumstances. As they stated they used punishment, advice, discussion or these three in different combinations in order to deal with their sons' problematic behaviour.

### **Peer Relations**

In addition, the use of sociometric technique in this study revealed the effect of peer relations in the development of bullying in schools. During participant observation bullies seemed to receive reward in their relationship with their peers (Berkowitz, 1993). They formed cliques that usually consisted of pupils that shared the same idea about aggression (Coie et al., 1999; Poulin and Boivin,

2000) or were afraid of the bully and so gave him the chance to be the leader (Boulton and Smith, 1994). In this way, bullies received emotional reward from their peer group. However, in the sociometric technique some of the bullies appeared to be isolated especially those who used physical forms of bullying or belonged to an ethnic minority (Dodge et al., 1990; Perry et al., 1990; Sandstrom and Coie, 1999; Vitario et al., 1992 (as cited in Sandstrom and Coie, 1999)). This was also confirmed by the teachers' replies to the interviews. The bully who belonged to an ethnic minority was 'stuck' to one pupil coming from the same minority and was very reluctant to mingle with the rest of the children. However, this may be due to language difficulties that hinder his communication with the rest of the children. Moreover, parents seemed to be aware of the influence of peer group in their sons' behaviour. In their interviews "bad friends" were one of the main factors that reinforced parents' stress and insecurities. So it seemed that the way the bullies formed their relationships with their peers was affected by the way they perceived themselves and others and by the way they were processing social information.

### **Bullies' self-perception**

The review of the relevant literature on self-perception and social cognition led to the formulation of two questions regarding the bullies' self-perception: How do bullies see themselves and to what extent does their perception of the self affect their relationship with others? How do bullies process social information within the course of a bullying act? Since human nature functions holistically, that is to say in a simultaneous relation with the 'self' and the social environment, it was very difficult to deal with these questions looking at them in

isolation from each other or by looking at them as different aspects of the same person, although in the theoretical review they were discussed in different sections. Thus, the answers to these questions were derived by looking at the psychological and social factors in integration with each other.

Bullies' self-perception was related to the way they were seeing others and the way they were processing social information. Through role-play the bullies agreed that a bully acts intentionally and has a particular purpose. In this way they also confirmed the intentional character of bullying. In addition, the results of the Olweus' Q- inventory support the thesis that the bullies do not believe that they are more aggressive than average children. However, in their replies to "The Self Image Profile for Children" (SIP-C) they admitted that their behaviour is often inappropriate. Their replies also agree with the results on the "Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children" (SPPC). Moreover, on SIP-C the bullies showed a high level of negative self-image, especially those who experienced or witnessed physical violence at home (Black and Newman, 1996; Osofsky, 1995). These results agree with their replies on the SPPC according to which boys who experienced or witnessed physical violence at home tended to be less satisfied with the way they were leading their life. Moreover, according to the results of the two tests bullies saw themselves as very positive and open persons in their relationships with others. They felt that they were socially accepted since they realised that they had supporters at school who perceived them as their leaders. However, in relation to others they also expressed a sense of vulnerability coupled with a sense of isolation or difference from others. Furthermore, they perceived themselves as very athletic. This fact highlighted the competition between them as it is related to their social competence. Being popular in games

seemed to affect their idea about their competence in athletics and outdoor games.

In addition, the boys reported a very positive idea regarding their physical appearance and academic performance. The latter may be due to the fact that their teachers were deliberately rewarding their effort in the classroom to prevent stigmatisation. Their results on the IQ test revealed a variety of cognitive abilities in this group of children, which support the assumption that these children are not cognitively impaired. However, some of them were attending special needs classrooms. This fact underlies the idea expressed by a teacher that bullies are often regarded as 'special needs' children so that they can be sent away from the classroom by the teacher. Finally, they seemed to lose their interest very easily in what happens around them and could hardly find a meaning in what they were doing or were told to do. This creates tension to them, which affects their relationship with the teacher or the rest of the pupils.

### **Social Information Processing**

The way bullies process social information was more apparent during role-play, during which the boys manifested their perceptions about bullying and the two main persons that take part in an act of bullying, namely the bully and the victim, through identification and projection.

To begin with, all the boys asserted the thesis that bullying is an unacceptable and hurtful act. Secondly, throughout the whole procedure the boys seemed to present a significant amount of empathy towards the bully and the victim. They



seemed to be clear about the bully's purposes and the victim's feelings, thoughts and social status. This supports the idea of the 'theory of mind' as it was introduced in a number of studies (Gomez et al., 2001; Lemerise and Arsenio, 2000; Quiggle et al., 1992; Sutton and Keogh, 2000, Sutton et al., 1999; Sutton, 2001; Waldman, 1996; Weiss et al., 1992). They also acknowledged the fact that the victim's situation is a result of bullying. Their high level of empathy towards the victim in combination with their manifestation that the bully always has a purpose when he initiates an aggressive act against someone else could confirm the intentional character of bullying as well as the fact that the bullies know what they are doing (Sutton et al., 1999). They are very clear about the consequences of their actions to their victim. They not only think about those before they initiate an act, but they also think about how they are going to cover them in order to handle the possibility of punishment.

Thirdly, the bullies seemed to realise that an act of bullying is an incident that may appear in the interpersonal relationship between the bully and the victim which, however, happens within a social context. Thus, it is also affected by the social normality of the milieu in which the bully initiates the act. Since the boys most frequently reported that the social isolation of the victim was the bully's purpose, the manipulation of the social factors, e.g. the rest of the children and the teacher, was seen as the way the bully could achieve his aim. In this way, it became apparent that the boys who presented bullying behaviour could also think about the way the social context is functioning and they could give a thorough picture of the relations and reactions of the significant people around them

which, in turn, could affect not only their actions but the consequences of their actions as well.

In addition, the expression of hesitation to talk to someone, and especially to the teacher, about bullying incidents either as a bully or as a victim, brought into the discussion the issue of confidentiality. It seemed that the boys' level of trust towards the significant others was very low and they mostly suggested suppression as a way to deal with the problem (Sutton and Keogh, 2000; 2001 (as cited in Sutton, 2001)). Their attitude reinforces the view that bullying is a hidden problem since the bully, as well as the victim, each has their own reasons not to trust other people and to suppress their feelings of anger and frustration. Thus, the teacher has to sustain a relationship of mutual trust and understanding with the pupils, which would enable the victims to disclose their feelings and not leave them to suffer in silence. The role of an educational counsellor would also be regarded as crucial in supporting the victim, the bully or even the teacher in their effort to face the problem of bullying effectively. This attitude is also related to an attempt to avoid responsibility for their actions (Sutton and Keogh, 2000).

Generally, the boys appeared to project their personal experience either as bullies or as victims to the characters presented in the role-play. They were repeating their parents' and teachers' perceptions about them, they were talking about their own story as abused children or socially isolated children. Their tendency to "see" their self in the characters of the role-play could be regarded as an

indication that bullies bring their personal history in any aggressive act they initiate or have to face.

### **Culture and Media**

The culture and the media were regarded in the relevant literature as factors that may promote or inhibit bullying in schools. Thus, how does Cypriot culture, as it was expressed in the communities where the nine boys were living affect the development of bullying in schools? The nine boys seemed to have different experiences from each other or different habits due to different financial conditions or different family and community norms. Generally, culture played a role in the development of bullying behaviour since it appeared to affect parenting indirectly. The most common experience all the parents shared during their interviews was the experience of war in 1974. Most of the parents of the bullies reported that the experience of this war was very traumatic to them. It seemed that it raised their insecurities regarding their children's lives and theirs, affecting in this way their parenting (For a review see Paardakoooper, 1999). In addition, having to face poverty and hazardous work conditions led to stress especially for the parents in the refugee campus (For a review see Pagani et al., 1999). Nevertheless, it seems that physical and psychological violence can exist in a family independently of their social or financial status. Moreover, the more educated the parents the better were their financial and work conditions, thus, the less stress they experienced regarding their children's future. In this way, the model of living in the refugee campus seemed very different in relation to the way of living in other communities where Primary 2 and Primary 3 were situated. In the campus almost all the families were receiving financial support

from the state. People were living in a competitive community and two of the mothers who lived there felt unwelcome in the community. One because she believed that their neighbours wanted to get her house and the other was isolated because she and her partner were carriers of Hepatitis B. The negative attitude of the parents towards the culture of their community was passed on to the bullies in the form of prejudices. As a result the boys seemed to get negative messages regarding the way human relations function and their place in a community in which aggression is embedded in everyday routine. However, even parents who do not live in the campus reported that they do not trust their community since in their neighbourhood youngsters presented all kinds of disruptive behaviour (e.g. drug abuse, bullying etc.). This mistrust led their child to become introverted and suspicious towards others.

Last, but not least, the media were regarded by both teachers and parents as a factor that enhances aggression. However, only one couple reported co-watching with their son in order to stress to him “the dangers of life”. In addition, parents referred to video games as a favourite activity for their children. Thus, deprivation of video games was used as a kind of punishment for some boys. However, none of the parents or the teachers connected media violence or violence presented in the video games directly with the development of bullying behaviour.

### **Personality**

The present study has focussed on specific aspects of inter-personal behaviour, perceptions, constructs and the intentions of bullies and key adults – parents and

teachers. It has shown that bullies' actions are strongly related to a variety of psychological and social factors, as discussed above. Further analyses could be carried out on the basis of a number of theories of personality, including constructs such as extroversion and neuroticism, for example, other personality traits as they are proposed in personality theories, e.g. friendliness, emotional instability, conscientiousness and energy. This analysis could be examined in comparison with the results of previous research which has investigated the association between bully-victim problems and personality dimensions. (Maynard and Joseph, 1997; Tani et al., 2003).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, owing to the multidimensional character of aggression the investigation of the different factors by means of questions raised during the theoretical review could not be restricted to the manifestation of causal relationships between the various factors and the development of bullying behaviour. Thus, no single causal factor could explain all the cases investigated in this study. It rather seems that the causal relationships are multifactorial and interactive, however, with different combinations and relative weighting. In this way, the importance of the contribution of each factor in the development of bullying behaviour lies in the way each factor affects the bully's self-perception and influences their relationships with the significant others in their life.

## **5.2. The Models:**

Four models were used throughout the initiation of this study: The Proposed Model of Aggression, The Model of the Empirical Work, The Model of Parents'

perceptions about Bullying or Bullies and The Model of Teachers' perceptions about Bullying or Bullies. Each one of them was formulated and used for different reasons.

### **5.2.1 The Proposed Model of Aggression:**

The Proposed Model of Aggression (Figure 1, p.80) was built up on the basis of the theoretical review and in order to enable the empirical investigation of the research questions of this study. Thus, its targets were to find out whether bullying could be considered as a form of aggression, to examine the situation in state Greek Cypriot Primary schools in Cyprus and to enable a systematic investigation of the bully's personality and social normality in Cyprus through its empirical aspect. The model included the different independent variables which give a multidimensional character to aggressive behaviour and which have become the focus of inquiry of many different human sciences. In addition, it led to a technical division of the various factors that contribute to the development of an aggressive act providing in this way a conceptual framework for the investigation of the phenomenon under study. In every part of the empirical aspect of the model the relevant theory was employed in order to examine the particular case.

The theoretical review based on the technical division of the various factors that contribute to the development of an aggressive act manifested in the model, as well as the empirical investigation of the first three variables of the Proposed Model of Aggression (Figure 1, p.80) employed in this study, indicate that bullying is a kind of aggressive behaviour since all the factors mentioned in all

the scientific theories about aggression, and which were included in the construction of the Proposed Model of Aggression, seem to play a role in the development of bullying behaviour in schools. In addition, the empirical investigation of the first three variables of the model supports this assumption. However, none of the factors mentioned in the theoretical review can be considered as the definite and only cause of bullying behaviour on its own. Similarly, none of the three variables that were included in the empirical aspect of the model can be regarded as an indication of the existence of bullying behaviour or of a bully on its own. Rather, it is the combination of different factors that lead to the creation of psycho-traumatic experiences, which then enable the expression of bullying behaviour at school. Consequently, the presence of only one of the first three variables included in the empirical aspect of the model cannot be considered as the only criterion to identify a person as “a bully”. Thus, a cross reference of the perceptions of the teachers, the pupils and the inspectors that was initiated in the first phase of the empirical work of this study led to the identification of the bullies that became the sample of the second phase of the empirical work in this study.

Moreover, according to the findings of this research not all the factors that were investigated seemed to contribute to the same extent in the development of bullying behaviour. For example in the nine cases investigated in this study the physiology of the bully did not seem to play a crucial role in the development of bullying behaviour. It was rather the psychological and social factors that affected the bully’s predispositions and led to the development of bullying behaviour. The results of this study also confirm that the bully’s intentions are

strongly related to their self-concept and social norms but their link with general cognitive ability (IQ) and school attainment seems to be very weak. The fact that intentions are internal variables (i.e. not immediately open to objective inspection) made their exploration difficult. However, it seemed that their investigation was possible only when intentions, mainly consisting of thoughts and feelings, were turned into praxis in the form of actions and became more observable as parts of the bully's and the researcher's external reality. Furthermore, the interpretation of bullying as a socially acceptable or unacceptable act in the school did not seem to play any role in its inhibition. The nine bullies who participated in this study turned their intentions into actions within the school environment even if they believed that their actions would be considered by their teachers and peers, and according to the social norms, as socially unacceptable behavioural patterns.

In addition, the investigation of the bullies' personality constructs in relation to their intentions was unable to be initiated since the boys could not respond to any kind of comparisons or abstractions in completing Personal Construct grids.

Finally, the difficulties teachers had risen in detecting the bullies or defining bullying in their school revealed that bullying is still a hidden problem in state Greek Cypriot Primary schools. However, the fact that the three schools from which the nine boys who participated in this study were selected are situated in different social backgrounds supports the thesis that bullying can occur in any social background as long as the psychosocial factors that play a major role in its development (e.g. domestic violence) exist.



### **5.2.2 The Model of Empirical Work:**

The multidimensional character of aggression and the complexity of the problem of bullying in schools led to the development of the Model of Empirical Work in order to systematise the research part of this project. According to this model the research part was undertaken in two main phases. Phase 1 was accomplished during the academic years 2000-2002, after the first literature review on aggression and bullying, and comprised five steps (see Figure 2,p.86-87). Its general aim was the selection of the nine case studies. Phase 2 was accomplished after the selection of case studies and consisted of twelve steps (see p.86). The general aim of this Phase was the investigation of the nine case studies.

The application of this model enabled the selection and the investigation of the different variables, which were related to the physiology, intentions and actions of the bully. Phase 1 revealed an agreement between the teachers', the pupils' and mainly the inspectors' opinions for the extent of expression of bullying in the three primary schools selected for this study. In addition, it revealed an agreement between the teachers' and the pupils' opinions about the selection of the nine boys who were nominated as "bullies" in this study. However, it also raised a couple of issues that should be taken under serious consideration in the investigation of bullying in schools. Firstly, the teachers seemed to have some difficulties in defining bullying behaviour and distinguishing it from other forms of anti-social activities at school. Secondly, both teachers and pupils raised ethical issues throughout the procedure regarding confidentiality and the protection of their privacy. Thirdly, it became apparent that the three schools had completely different cultures and so the researcher had to adjust her approaches

to the particular culture of each school in order to obtain the relevant data. For example in Primary 3, which was situated in a wealthy area, teachers refused to give the names of the potential bullies in written form because they were afraid of the reaction of the Parents Association. So the researcher had to ask them to give the names orally.

Phase 2 consisted of a variety of research approaches and instruments and revealed the uniqueness of each of the nine boys that participated in this study through a thorough investigation of their self-concept and social norms at home and at school (see p.87). Again ethical issues regarding confidentiality were raised in interviewing the parents and the teachers, despite of the fact that all the parents and teachers participated willingly in this study. Every one of them contributed to the completion of the bullies' picture in a valuable way, offering their perception as the product of their experience in their interaction with the bullies. In addition, there was a noticeable difference between the replies of the parents of the bullies and the bullies and the control group consisted by the control pupils and their parents. Finally, the last part of Phase 2, which referred to the application of Personal Constructs had to be omitted since the nine boys did not seem capable of doing either comparisons or abstractions.

### **5.2.3 The Model of Parents' Perceptions about Bullying or Bullies**

The models of parents' and teachers' perceptions about bullies or bullying were formulated in order to enable an investigation of the factors related to the bullies' social normality, namely the bullies' family and school environment and, thus, became the framework of the analysis of the parents' and teachers' interviews.

The factors investigated by means of parents' interviews were derived from the Model of Parents' perceptions about Bullying or Bullies (Figure 3, p.108) that formed the framework for the parents' interview analysis. According to the model parental health conditions, psychological characteristics, social characteristics and personal history are the basic factors that may affect their perception about their child and their child's behaviour at home. However, the results of this study suggest that not all the factors that were included in the model contribute to the same extent to the development of the parents' perceptions about the bully or bullying. For example, the physiology of the parent does not seem to be an important factor in the development of parental perceptions in this study: it only affects parenting indirectly when parents' physiological problems are due to drug abuse or lead the family to social isolation.

On the contrary, parental personal history seemed to play a role in the way parents handled punishment, determined their relationship with each other and their source of anxiety and insecurity regarding their sons' future. Generally, parental life history affected the physiological, psychological and social factors that lead to the manifestation of parents' perceptions. Nevertheless, even within the different factors there were some elements that were more influential. In respect to the psychological factors parental life satisfaction did not seem to play a role in the development of parents' perceptions, whereas the parental stereotypes, their self-perception as a parent, their defence mechanisms, their stress and insecurities, parental expectations, their relationship with their partner

and their relationship with the bully seemed to play a crucial role in the development of parents' perceptions about bullying and the bullies. In the group of sociological factors, relationship with school, communication with classroom teacher and sibling relationships seemed to be more directly influential to the development of parental perceptions, rather than financial-work conditions and relationship of the parents with the community. The last two affect parental perceptions indirectly, as in deprived communities they can raise parents' stress and insecurities.

In addition, the results of this study support that parental perceptions regarding bullying or bullies can be considered primarily as a reaction to the child's behaviour and can be manifested into actions of reward or punishment. In this way, parental actions can not only reinforce or change bullying behaviour but they can also change or reinforce parental perceptions about bullies or bullying according to the child's reaction to them. Thus, it seems that there is an interaction between actions and perceptions of parents in cases of bullying. Parents react to their child's bullying behaviour according to the way they perceive their child and his actions. In this study parents who attributed or were subjected to physical violence by their partners at home tended to react with physical punishment of their child's bullying behaviour. The boys who witnessed physical violence in their home experienced this as another form of violence towards them. This attitude leads to a developmental effect of the parents on the bully's behaviour. Thus, a child can develop into a bully by modelling the parents' behaviour at school where he may feel that he is more powerful than other children.

Nevertheless, the parents of the control pupils also reported that they used physical violence but very rarely. Their children did not present bullying behaviour at school. This evidence may imply that what really matters in discipline, is the holistic experience a child has in a relationship with his parents. If the relationship is experienced by the child as generally positive, then the rare use of physical punishment does not seem to have a traumatic effect, since the child does not perceive it as a form of violence.

Finally, since the interviews were not conducted blind, the effect of the impact and the influence of the researcher on the interpretation of interview data of the bullies' parents and the control pupils' parents was an issue that had to be seriously taken into consideration. The researcher had to distance her self from the situation she was looking at and to try not to expect different replies from the two different groups of parents, in order to gain subjectivity. This made the role of the researcher an emotionally demanding task and especially difficult in the cases of domestic violence.

#### **5.2.4 The Model of Teachers' Perceptions about Bullying or Bullies**

A pupil can be regarded as a bully by one teacher but not another since their nomination is subjected to their individual perceptions. This fact led to the necessity to investigate the factors that can possibly affect teachers' perceptions about the bullies or bullying and consequently, determine the level of their interpretation of an act. This was done by means of teachers' interviews that were analysed on the basis of a Model about Teachers' perceptions (see Figure 4,p.111).

According to this model the main variables that may affect teachers' perceptions are their physiology, their psychological input and their social environment. These three factors are influenced by the teachers' personal experience as a result of their individual life journey. Then, they become part of the teachers' perceptions as they contribute to their development and, in this way, they affect the initiation of their acts, which in turn reinforce or hinder the child's acts. Again, not all these factors contribute to the same extent in the development of the teachers' perceptions. The physiology of the teachers, according to the results of this study, is a very weak factor. In regard to their personal history it seems that it generally affects the psychological and social factors in that most of the teachers seemed to transfer their experiences from their childhood and from their relationship with their parents to the way they perceived the role of the parents today. These elements also affect teachers' stereotypes. The most influential psychological factors that affect teachers' perceptions appear to be their self-perception, including defence mechanisms, and their stereotypes. Job satisfaction, and teachers' stress did not seem to affect the teachers' perceptions about bullying or the bullies to a great extent. Furthermore, in respect to the social factors, family support and the physical environment including high temperatures in spring and summer, did not seem to play a crucial role in the development of the teachers' perceptions. However, school expectations, the parents' relationship with school, staff and class social climate seemed to influence teachers' perceptions about bullying or the bullies since they increase teachers' stress by reinforcing or inhibiting their efforts to face the problem of bullying. Of course these factors were different in different schools. Thus, they

affect teachers' perceptions in different ways. In Primary 1, for example, it was apparent that the members of the staff discussed the issue of bullying everyday and tried to give support to each other, whereas in Primary 3 the issue of bullying was 'hidden' in teachers' discussions because teachers were afraid that they would have to face the negative reaction of the parents' association if their comments were known to them.

Furthermore, the results of this study reveal that bullies' physical appearance, relationship with others, intelligence, school attendance and character are the main elements which are taken into consideration by the teachers in the process of developing their perceptions about the bullies. In the same way, dialogue, punishment, reward, ignorance, body touch, communication with parents and coordination with specialists were the most common actions initiated by the teachers in order to deal with the problem of bullying in schools.

In addition, from the teachers' responses to the interviews two main points arise which were related to the definitions of bullying. Firstly, most of the teachers reported that bullying in their classes was an issue transferred from previous years. In this way they manifested a longitudinal character of the problem. Secondly, it seemed that their perception about the bully was strongly related to their perception about bullying. Unlike the parents, they did not seem to see each of these factors in isolation from the other.

In conclusion, the application of the two models of parents' and teachers' perceptions in this study revealed that these two factors can affect the bully's

actions directly since parents and teachers aim at the formation of the child's character and behaviour through systematic discipline strategies. With teachers what matters in discipline is the quality of the whole relationship they have with the bully. The teacher in Primary 1 admitted with a sense of guilt that she 'gave one or two slaps', but this did not seem to affect the positive attitude of the bullies towards her since their relationship was experienced by her as well as by bullies as generally very positive. In addition, in this study no evidence was found for a possible relationship between teachers' bullying behaviour and the development of bullying in school. Teachers who participated in this study seemed very much aware of not bullying their pupils. They did not use physical punishment or intended to socially isolate the bullies. They rather seemed to support them as they realized that in the bullies' mind they represent the idea of 'the school'. This was very obvious in the case of the teacher in Primary 1. The bullies in that school were labeled by their teachers in previous years as 'SEN' children. However, this study revealed that cognitive ability had a very weak link with the development of bullying behaviour. In addition, the boys' results on the IQ test in Primary 1 suggest that these boys were not cognitively impaired. However, at the beginning of the school year the boys insisted that they should leave the classroom and attend the special needs classroom in their school. Their teacher challenged their assumption and insisted that they should stay in their classroom because they were not impaired. Of course, she had to support them to catch up with the rest and to face their negative reaction until they were adjusted and accepted in their classroom. In this way, this teacher challenged not only the bullies' assumptions of their selves but the school's policy in dealing effectively with bullying. In this way, this study supports that the role of the teacher it is



very crucial in the application of any school policy aiming at the inhibition of bullying in schools. The teacher can challenge the stereotypes regarding bullying or the bullies at school and can give support in different elements, either in the emotional or cognitive domain.

Nevertheless, the results of this study support the thesis that in the development of bullying behaviour teachers are not so powerful contributors compared with parents and family. Children primarily discover life within the family and through family relations. They then construct their identity at two levels: internally, as self-determination and socially (social position, role in family etc.). Family is the central factor from which a child derives ideologies, aspects and virtues. In this way, it provides the child with the presuppositions for a normal or destructive social and emotional development. Thus, by the time a child comes to school they have already formed a primal sense of self and a basic way of relating with others. Moreover, the presence of the parents in the child's life is more permanent, whereas teachers change every year or different teachers may apply different discipline strategies with the same child. So it seems that the messages received by the child regarding its behaviour are more consistent if they are given by parents. Furthermore, a teacher's interference in the child's behaviour is only limited within the school environment. Teachers cannot interfere directly into a family system by prohibiting, for example, a partner from hitting his wife and children. This is a problem that teachers reported very often in their interviews and led them to feel hopeless in dealing effectively with the problem. So what should the teachers do since they cannot influence the family factors directly? The results of this study suggest that the teachers need to

sustain a school policy that will bring together all the factors involved in the problem of bullying, namely the parents, the educational psychologists and the children, in order to inhibit the consequences and the 'symptoms' of domestic violence in the school environment. The ways of dealing with this issue will be discussed in the next section.

### **5.3 Suggestions for intervention:**

According to the results of this study bullying could be the result of dysfunctional relationships, especially with the bully's mother (Freud, 1949; 1955; Klein, 1928) or a reaction to frustration (Dollard et al., 1939) or a modelling of aggressive behaviour experienced at home (Bandura, 1973). In addition, not all people react to aggression in the same way. Thus, all the factors that are involved in the educational setting, namely the teachers, the parents and the bullies expressed in different ways their need for support to deal with bullying. Therefore, any effort that would aim to prevention or intervention should include all these factors both individually or systematically (Twemlow and Cohen, 2003). So, to what extent and in what ways can education interfere in order to control bullying in schools?

The assumption that the school can achieve a permanent inhibition of bullying could be regarded as unrealistic. Thus, a bullying prevention and intervention program should aim at the protection of all the pupils in the school environment, including both the bullies and the victims, and the improvement of the quality of school life in order to avoid the stigmatisation of the bullies or the school in which the problem of bullying is expressed in a serious extent.

Throughout this study it has been made apparent that the teachers had difficulties in acknowledging the bullies in their classroom. They seemed to confuse bullying with other forms of destructive behaviour e.g. hyperactivity. Moreover, they sometimes employed denial since they felt ineffective to deal with the problem. However, those who realised the problem soon acknowledged that they should find a way to deal with it on their own. Thus, some of them were punishment oriented, some others ignored the problem or denied it. Even if some of them tried to employ dialogue they did not seem certain of what they should discuss with the bully and how to deal with him. Furthermore, schools in their effort to deal with the problem as institutions employed different, and sometimes inconsistent, ways of intervention according to the school ethos, the role of the parents' committee and the culture of the community the pupils were coming from. Nevertheless, these provisional ways of dealing with bullying did not seem to be effective with all kinds of bullying and with the different characteristics of each bully.

These constraints suggest the need for an adequate in-service training programme for teachers (Vernberg and Gamm, 2003). This programme should have an experiential character so that teachers will feel safe and supported to talk about the problem from their perspective and according to their experience as a factor involved in the educational task. In this way, through a procedure of self-awareness they could re-define their role in relation to the problem and overcome their fears and reservations to deal with it. Moreover, teachers should be enabled to model appropriate behaviours and, thus, to assert which behaviours are appropriate and which behaviours will not be accepted. Similarly, the

employment of cooperative learning and peer mediation programmes will enhance positive peer relation in the classroom and social problem solving skills (Guerra, 2003). In addition, since most teachers regarded the role of the educational psychologist as very important in dealing with bullies, more time and opportunities should be given to teachers to cooperate with educational psychologists and other specialists on a systematic basis. Finally, it seems that the manifestation of a more consistent code of discipline for state primary schools in Cyprus, which will be acknowledged and respected by the teachers, the parents and the students, would help each of these factors to clarify their role in dealing with the problem. Bullies will realise their limits and consequences of their actions and teachers will be provided with a consistent and secure guide to deal with the problem.

Parents also seemed to be asking for support, sometimes desperately so. Despite the fact that the bullies' parents rarely visited school, most of them asked the researcher if they could meet her again and discuss with ways to deal with the problem. However, when they referred to specialists they did not seem to trust them. More time spent with the teacher and the educational psychologist would give them the support they need and help them to deal with their child's aggressive behaviour. In the timetable of state primary schools in Cyprus only 40 minutes per week are given to the teacher to see all the parents of their class. Mentoring programmes organised in school can also help them to ameliorate their relationship with their children (Guerra, 2003). Nevertheless, school cannot interfere into factors like marital relationships as this could be regarded as an invasion into people's private life. School can only give clear guidelines to the

parents on how to deal with the bully, so that the bully will get consistent messages regarding their behaviour. The school should also give the chance to the parents to feel comfortable to report any problems regarding their child's presence at school. Parents should also feel "safe" at school and endorse the idea that the aim of the school is to help and support them and not to accuse them and raise their defensiveness.

Last, but not least, the bully's frustrations, expectations, perceptions, feelings and uniqueness seem to be part of his actions against another child. In this way, bullying can be seen as a personal problem for bullies. In addition, as all the teachers who participated in this study believed, the bully's actions could not be regarded in isolation from the bully's personal characteristics. Thus, the bully's actions should be seen in relation to their characteristics and as a means to "learn" the bully as a unique personality. Bullies who participated in this study asserted the need to trust someone and talk about their lives. Their attitude implies that the introduction of a counselling service in primary schools would contribute to the prevention and intervention of this problem. As Smith and Ananiadou (2003) argue, large-scale school-based intervention programmes in several countries had more success in primary than in secondary schools. At the moment in Cyprus there are counselors only in secondary schools. However, problems with a longitudinal problem like bullying exist from previous years. The role of a counselor in primary schools, especially in schools where the social environment aggravates the problem, would contribute to help schools face the problem more effectively through prevention and intervention programs. In addition, the school can help bullies to deal with academic expectations. Children

coming from ethnic minorities should be assisted to learn the language in a communicative way so as to be able to mingle with others. Extra support should be given to the pupils whose cognitive abilities are impaired. However, all the children should feel accepted and appreciated at school whatever the level academic performance is. Finally, it seems that any prevention or intervention program regarding bullying comes down to relationships, since “the expression of violence is always heavily influenced by its interpersonal relationships” (Twemlow and Cohen, 2003, p.117). Thus, an implementation of a lesson for social and emotional development in the curriculum of state primary schools in Cyprus would enable the children gain self awareness, “to monitor and regulate feelings thoughts and actions, to show empathic concern about others, to cope with and solve interpersonal problems, to engage in positive peer relations and to gain a positive identity and future orientation” (Guerra, 2003, p.144).

The suggestions mentioned above were manifested on the basis of the European perspective of Cypriot educational system. Within this perspective the Department of Primary Education in Cyprus has already produced a package of proposed ideas, which aim at “an education for democratic and open European citizenship” (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2004). These are education for human rights, civic education, intercultural education and global education. According to the newsletter of the Department of Education, these ideas are an effort to help all the educational factors to be prepared for their entrance in the united European family. Cyprus’s entrance in the EU will demand an adjustment to the present educational system, which at the moment is monolithic as the majority of the pupils and the teachers are Greek Cypriots. In addition, in a small

community like Cyprus, stigmatization of people or schools can be inevitable. Thus, an education based on the acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity and on an active contribution of the parents and the pupils within an autonomous and flexible school setting will be required in order to protect all the people involved in the educational process and to ameliorate the quality of school life.

Democratic citizenship, as it was formulated in the formal policy of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture is based on the way children perceive themselves as active members of the society and the world around them. Since bullying is a problem strongly related to the same factors and especially to the quality of peoples' relationships in and out of school, a possible program for bullying prevention and intervention could be initiated within this effort.

#### **5.4 Limitations:**

This study was an attempt to investigate the bully's developmental history and personality by looking at their behaviour and the significant others around them. The results of this study can give a light to some aspects of bullying in state primary schools in Cyprus. Nevertheless, there are some limitations that have to be taken into consideration.

To begin with, as it was stated in the introduction, as observers we can *see* actions, but we can only *infer* intentions. Thus, the perceptions of the victim are also important as they can provide further supportive evidence of what we cannot see, namely the intentions and expectations of the bully. Besides, not all people react to aggression in the same way. However, due to the time and word limit of

this study the perceptions of the victims were unable to be investigated. A possible continuation of this research should also focus on the other factors of the Proposed Model of Aggression, namely the victims and their perceptions in order to get more evidence on the issue of bullying.

Moreover, according to the definition of bullying that was used in this study “bullying is often persistent, sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years” (Sharp and Smith, 1994). Nevertheless, the time dimension to this problem was not adequately examined within the limits of this study.

In addition, the examination of the physiological factors reported in the Proposed Model of Aggression could only be investigated with special equipment in biological laboratories. This could not be done within the limits of this study. However, this limitation suggests that the multidimensional character of aggression demands collective contribution from all different scientific areas in order to be adequately examined.

Furthermore, the size of the sample, that is the nine case studies, and the fact that the main sample consisted only by boys limits the generalisatability of the results of this study. The scale was a direct result of the decision to go in depth and investigate the factors that may lead these boys to present bullying behaviour at school. To achieve this it was necessary to examine the most severe cases in each class of year 6 in the three schools that presented the highest levels of bullying according to the teachers and the pupils, so limiting the number of potential children for case study. Also, given that the children identified by this method



were all boys, it was inappropriate to seek out girls as participants. Nevertheless, it is recognised that it is not possible to generalise these results beyond boys. An attempt should be made in future research to investigate girls' aggression in the school setting and the factors that may affect the development of different forms of bullying in boys compared with girls. This would enable the manifestation of a more complete idea of the phenomenon in Greek Cypriot State primary schools.

Nevertheless, despite difficulties the whole procedure was very exciting. People were very willing to talk about their lives, they became emotional, realized how much they love their children and talked about their concern to do their utmost as parents or teachers. Some of them asked if they could come again and talk with the researcher. Teachers also expressed the idea that more time should be given for them to discuss this issue with a specialist and they all reported that they were looking forward to see the results of this study. They also stressed that they expect to get practical solutions to the problem and not theoretical affirmations from the specialists.

In conclusion, during the process of this study it seemed that the bully's challenging behaviour is a challenge for the educational factors to understand them "developmentally and as thinking feeling human beings" (Twemlow and Cohen, 2003, p.120). In the end, this will lead to a change in educational thinking towards a human centred education that would focus on the 'bullies' in a positive way, consider their potentialities and view each child holistically as a person, rather than focus on specific negative elements such as their behaviour or learning difficulties. As a result, children as the boys in this study, would be seen

primarily as *children*, with problems and not simply as ‘the problem of the school’ as ‘bullies’. This change would bring back to the point where this study started, that is the focus on the person by looking at the behaviour, and acknowledge the excitement of the endless exploring of human nature in all its uniqueness, as directly translated from Greek, as “psycho-somatic integrity”.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Survey on bullying in Greek Cypriot Primary Schools**

##### **Questionnaire for teachers**

Dear Colleagues,

The aim of this survey is to figure out the scale of bullying as a form of aggressive behaviour **among pupils** in Greek Cypriot Primary schools and to contribute in its confrontation. Therefore, the report of your own personal experience will be valuable for the achievement of this goal.

Bullying, as a form of aggressive behaviour, is “an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate” (Sharp and Smith, 1994) on behalf of a pupil or a group of pupils towards a pupil or a group of pupils.

The interest of this survey is focused on **your own personal experience in your class or classes you are teaching during the academic year 2000-2001** and not on your beliefs about what is happening generally in schools. Thus, in this questionnaire there are no correct, false or even “expected” answers. All answers are respected and valuable as long as they express your personal aspect about the issue of bullying, which results from your own personal experience. The confidentiality of your answers is confirmed by the anonymity of your answers.

After you answer the questionnaire please return it to the following address: **30, Andreas Avraamides Street, Dasoupoli, 2024, Nicosia** in the envelope included.

Your willingness to participate in this survey by answering this questionnaire according to your personal experience will be regarded as an important contribution towards dealing with bullying in schools.

Many thanks in advance.

Chrystalla Kaloyirou

**Part A:**

**Circle or put a ✓ in the box :**

1. According to your personal experience to what extent are the following forms of bullying observed **among pupils** in your school? (1= not at all , 7= to a great extent)

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) physical bullying<br>(e.g. hitting, kicking, damaging<br>or taking belongings) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- b) verbal bullying  
(e.g. name-calling, insulting, repeated teasing  
racist remarks)
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| c) indirect bullying<br>(e.g. spreading nasty rumours,<br>excluding someone from social groups) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

2. According to the incidents in your classroom, to what extent do **boys** in your classroom present the following forms of bullying? (1= not at all , 7= to a great extent)

- a) physical bullying  
(e.g. hitting, kicking, damaging  
or taking belongings)

- b) verbal bullying  
(e.g. name-calling, insulting, repeated teasing  
racist remarks)
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- c) indirect bullying  
(e.g. spreading nasty rumours,  
excluding someone from social groups)

3. According to the incidents in your classroom, to what extent do **girls** in your classroom present the following forms of bullying? (1= not at all , 7= to a great extent)

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) physical bullying<br>(e.g. hitting, kicking, damaging<br>or taking belongings) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- b) verbal bullying  
(e.g. name-calling, insulting, repeated teasing  
racist remarks) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- c) indirect bullying  
(e.g. spreading nasty rumours,  
excluding someone from social groups) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. In accordance with your own personal experience to what extent do the following factors play a role in **the development** of bullying behaviour in pupils ? (1= not at all ,7 = to a great extent, DK= I Don't Know)
- a) heredity 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- b) pathological factors  
(e.g. brain dysfunction,  
neurological disorders etc.) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- c) parental relations 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- d) the Media (especially television) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- e) the order of children in the family 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- f) the aggressive attitude of the other pupils  
towards the specific child 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- g) the disapproval of bullying behaviour  
towards the specific child by the teacher 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- h) the number of pupils in the classroom 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- i) the relations between parents and children  
in the family (time spent together, enhancement  
or disapproval of bullying at home,  
academic expectations etc.) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- j) the sex of the child 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- k) academic achievement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- l) the specific conditions of living  
in the refugee campuses 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- m) coming from a minority group 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- n) relations between children in the family 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK
- o) the financial status of the family 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DK

p) the school building  
(the arrangement of the rooms etc.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

5. In accordance with your own personal experience to what extent can the following actions lead to an **effective confrontation** of bullying in schools ?  
(1= not at all , 7= to a great extent)

a) corporal punishment

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

b) prompt the pupil to change school

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

c) psychological punishment  
(e.g. deprivation of a game or authority )

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

d) verbal offence in public

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

e) ask the pupil to leave the class

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

f) referring to the head teacher

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

g) contact with the parents of the child

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

h) discussion of the problem with the class

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

i) discussion of the problem  
in the staff meeting

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

j) co-operation with the police

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

k) application of a specific school policy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

l) co-operation with other specialists  
( e.g. educational psychologists etc.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

6. According to your personal experience in what other ways can the problem of bullying be tackled in schools ?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....



7. According to your experience to what extent does bullying take place in the following places : (1= not at all, 7= to a great extent)

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) in the classroom                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) in the school yard                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| c) in the canteen during break time                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| d) on the way from home to school                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| e) on the way from school to home                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| f) in the places where children play in the afternoon | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

8. Have you ever dealt with the issue of bullying in schools during your training as a teacher ?

Yes ☐

No ☐

I don't know ☐

9. If yes, when did you deal with this issue? (please tick all boxes that apply to your case)

a) During my graduate studies ☐

b) During the in-service training seminars offered by the Pedagogical Institute ☐

c) During the in-service graduate course offered by the Greek Universities and the University of Cyprus ☐

d) In various educational conferences ☐

If yes, please declare the conferences or seminars you attended :

.....  
 .....  
 .....

e) By reading relevant articles and books ☐

If yes, please declare the books or articles you read on this issue :

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

e) During my post graduate studies abroad ☐

10. In accordance with your own personal experience the problem of bullying in schools is:

increasing ☐

decreasing ☐

staying the same ☐

11. According to your personal experience to what extent can the following means help the teacher **to tackle effectively** with the problem of bullying in schools? (1= not at all, 7= to a great extent)

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) More training on this issue during their graduate studies                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) More in- service training courses   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| c) More frequent contact with the parents                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| d) More frequent contact with the specialists (educational psychologists etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| e) More frequent co-operation with the police                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| f) A smaller number of pupils in the classroom                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| g) Reduced teaching and learning material in each subject                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| h) The re-introduction of corporal punishment in schools                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

i) Other (please declare)

.....

12. If you want to make any other comments on the issue of bullying please use this space:

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Part B :****Complete or put a ✓ in the box.**1. Position:Teacher ☐Head Deputy ☐Head teacher ☐2. Sex:Male ☐Female ☐3. Class:1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐I teach in more than one classes ☐I am a SEN teacher ☐4. Years of service (including this academic year):1-5 ☐ 6- 10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26- 30 ☐ 31+ -.... ☐5. Academic Qualifications:(Please declare all the qualifications you have)Teaching Diploma of the Pedagogical Academy of Cyprus ☐Diploma of in-service training of the Pedagogical Institute ☐Bachelor Degree in Education (in-service graduate course) given by a Greek University or the University of Cyprus ☐Bachelor of Education obtained in a Greek University or the University of Cyprus ☐Bachelor of Education obtained in a foreign University ☐Postgraduate Degree in Education (Diploma/ Master's) ☐PhD or EdD ☐

Other (please declare)

.....

Thanks again for your co-operation.

## APPENDIX 2

### Olweus Bully/Victim questionnaire for pupils ( the English translation of the Greek version)

School:..... Date:..... Class:.....

**Please answer all the questions from 1-40 putting an X in the box:**

**1. Do you like school ?**

- ☐ I dislike school very much
- ☐ I dislike school
- ☐ I neither like or dislike School
- ☐ I like school
- ☐ I like school very much

**2. Are you a boy or a girl ?**

- ☐ Boy
- ☐ Girl

**3. What language do you speak at home?**

.....

**4. How many good friends do you have in the class ?**

- ☐ None
- ☐ I have 1 good friend in my class
- ☐ I have 2 or 3 good friends in my class
- ☐ I have 4 or 5 good friends in my class
- ☐ I have 6 or more good friends in my class

<p><b>5. How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> it has only happened once or twice</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p>
--	--

**Questions 6 to 24 refer to how often other children have bullied you in different ways the last couple of months. Please answer all the following questions:**

<p><b>6. I was called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months</p>
---	---

<p><b>7. Other students let me out of things on purpose, excluded me from their group of friends, or completely ignored me</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months</p>
--	---

<b>8. I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> several times a week <input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months
---	--

<b>9. Other children told lies or spread false rumours about me and tried to make others dislike me</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> several times a week <input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months
---	--

<b>10. I had money or other things taken away from me or damaged</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> several times a week <input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months
--	--

<b>11. I was threatened or forced to do didn't want to do</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> several times a week <input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months
---	--

<p><b>12. I was bullied by mean names or comments about my race or colour</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months</p>
---	---

<p><b>13. I was bullied with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months</p>
--	---

<p><b>14. I was bullied in another way</b></p> <p><b>In this case, please write in what way:</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It hasn't happened to me the last couple of months</p>
--	---

<p><b>15. In which class (es) is the student or the students who bully you?</b></p> <p><b><u>(Put an X in every box that suits your case)</u></b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't been bullied at school in the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> in my class</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> in different class but in the same grade</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> in a lower grade</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> in a higher grade</p>
---	---

<p><b>16. Have you been bullied by boys or girls?</b></p> <p><u>(Put an X in every box that suits your case)</u></p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't been bullied the last couple of months</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied mainly by 1 girl</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied by several girls</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied mainly by 1 boy</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied by several boys</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied by both boys and girls</div>
<p><b>17. By how many students have you usually been bullied ?</b></p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't been bullied in the last couple of months</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied mainly by 1 student</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied by a group of 2-3 students</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied by a group of 4-9 students</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied by a group of more Than 9 students</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I was bullied by several different students or groups of students</div>
<p><b>18. How long does the bullying lasted ?</b></p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't been bullied at school the last couple of months</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> it lasted one or two weeks</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> it lasted about a month</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> it has lasted about six months</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> it has lasted about a year</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> it has gone for several years</div>



**If you haven't been bullied the last couple of months proceed to Question 21.  
If you have been bullied by one or more students answer Question 19 to explain where that happened.**

**19. Where have you been bullied?**

a) in the playground/ athletic field ?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
b) in the corridors and the school hall	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
c) in the classroom when the teacher was there	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
d) in the classroom when the teacher wasn't there	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
e) in the toilets	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
f) on my way to school or on my way home	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
ζ) in the school bus	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
η) somewhere else in the school  <b>If you have been bullied somewhere else, where have you been bullied ?</b>  ..... .....	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you haven't talked to anyone about being bullied go on to Question 21. If you have talked to someone about being bullied answer Question 20 . Put an X in a box to show to whom you have talked to about being bullied.

20. To whom have you told that you have been bullied ?

a) to my class teacher	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
b) another adult at school ( a different teacher, the principal/headmaster, the school nurse, the educational psychologist)	Yes	No
c) to my parents	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
δ) to my brother or sister	Yes	No
ε) to my friends	Yes	No
στ) to someone else	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is yes to whom did you talk to ?		
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....		
.....		
.....		

21. How often do the teachers or other adults at school try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Almost never	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Once in a while	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Almost always	

<b>22. How often do other students try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Almost never <input type="checkbox"/> Once in a while <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Often <input type="checkbox"/> Almost always
<b>23. Has an adult at home contacted the school to try to stop your being bullied at school in the past couple of months ?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> I haven't been bullied the last couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> no, they haven't contacted the school <input type="checkbox"/> yes, they have contacted the school once <input type="checkbox"/> yes, they have contacted the school several times
<b>24. When you see a student in your age being bullied at school what do you feel or think ?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> This is probably what he/ she deserves <input type="checkbox"/> I don't care <input type="checkbox"/> I feel sorry for him/her <input type="checkbox"/> I feel sorry for him/her and I want to help him/her

Questions 25-40 ask for information about bullying other students and they refer to how often you have bullied others in the following ways the last couple of months. Please answer all the questions by putting an X in a box.

<p><b>25. How often have you taken part in bullying another student (s) at school the past couple of months ?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>
<p><b>26. I called another student (s) mean names, made fun of or teased him or her in a hurtful way.</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>
<p><b>27. I kept him/her out of things on purpose, excluded him/her from my group of friends or completely ignored him/her</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>

<p><b>28. I hit, kicked, pushed and shoved him/her around or locked him/her indoors</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>
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<p><b>29. I spread false rumours about him/her and tried to make others dislike him/her</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>
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<p><b>30. I took money or other things from him/her or damaged his/her belongings</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>
---	---

<p><b>31. I threatened or forced him/her to do things he/she didn't want to do</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 ή 2 φορές τους τελευταίους δύο μήνες</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 ή 3 φορές το μήνα</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> μια φορά τη βδομάδα</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> πολλές φορές τη βδομάδα</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Δε συνέβηκε τους τελευταίους δύο μήνες</p>
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<p><b>32. I bullied him/her with mean names or comments about his/her race or colour</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>
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<p><b>33. I bullied him/her with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>
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<p><b>34. I bullied him/her in another way</b></p> <p><b>In this case, please write in what way:</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Only once or twice the last couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> about once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> several times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school the last couple of months</p>
---	---

<p><b>35. Has your class teacher talked to you about your bullying other students at school in the past couple of months ?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No, they haven't talked with me about it</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, they have talked to me about it once</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, they have talked to me about it several times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school in the last couple of months</p>
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<p><b>36. Has any adult at home talked with you about your bullying other students at school in the past couple of months ?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No, they haven't talked with me about it</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, they have talked to me about it once</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, they have talked to me about it several times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't bullied anyone at school in the last couple of months</p>
---	---

<p><b>37. Do you think you could join in bullying a student whom you didn't like ?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Maybe</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
--	---

<p><b>38. How do you usually react if you see or understand that a student in your age is being bullied by other students ?</b></p> <p><u>(Put an X in every box that suits your case)</u></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I have never noticed that students in my age have been bullied</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I take part in the bullying</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't do anything, but I think bullying others is OK</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I just watch what goes on</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't do anything but I think that I have to help the bullied student</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I try to help the bullied student in many ways</p>
<p><b>39. How often are you afraid of being bullied by other students in your school ?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Never</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Seldom</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fairly often</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Often</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very often</p>
<p><b>40. Overall, how much do you think your class teacher has done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months ?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Little or nothing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fairly little</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enough</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Much</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very much</p>

**Thank you very much !**



### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **The Olweus' list of criteria**

**Please read the following description and write the names of three (3) children in class .....who present this kind of behaviour according to your opinion:**

“ At school bullies typically tease (repeatedly) in a nasty way, taunt, intimidate, threat, call names at, make fun of, ridicule, push around, shove, hit, kick and damage the belongings of other students, etc. They may display such behaviour toward many students but select *in particular weaker and relatively defenceless students as their targets*. Also, many bullies induce some of their followers to do the “dirty work” while they themselves keep in the background [...]. [They may also] spread rumours and manipulate the friendship relations in the class.

Bullies:

\* may be physically stronger than their classmates and their victims in particular; may be the same age as or somewhat older than their victims; are physically effective in play activities, sports and fights (applies particularly to boys)

\* have strong needs to dominate and subdue other students, to assert themselves with power and threat, and to get their own way; they may brag about their actual or imagined superiority over their students

\* are hot-tempered, easily angered, impulsive, and have low frustration tolerance; they have difficulty confirming the rules and tolerating adversities and delays, and may try to gain advantage by cheating

\* are generally oppositional, defiant, and aggressive towards adults (including teachers and parents) and may be frightening also to adults (depending upon the age and physical strength of the young person); are good at talking themselves out of “difficult situations”

\*are seen as being tough, hardened, and show little empathy with students who are victimized

\* are not anxious or insecure and they typically have a relatively positive view of themselves (average or better than average self-esteem)

\* engage at a relatively early age (as compared with their peers) in other anti social behaviours including stealing, vandalism, and getting drunk; associate with “bad companions”

\* may be average, above or below average in popularity among their classmates, but they often have support from at least a small number of peers [...]

\* With regard to their school achievement, they may be average, above or below average [...] (Olweus, 1993, p. 58-60).

**Three (3) pupils in class ..... who present this kind of behaviour or the characteristics mentioned above are according to my opinion the following :**

a).....

b).....

c).....

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Semi-structured interview with the parents**

#### **1. Life History**

- a) Where do you come from?
- b) How many children were in your family ? (boys and girls)
- c) How would you describe your relationship with your parents? ( e.g. parent's job, parent's death – why and when)
- d) How would you describe your childhood? Did you go to school? At what age did you leave school? What do you remember from school? What do you remember most from your childhood? Were there any events at that period that affect or changed your life? What experiences did you have from war? Did you have any consequences in your family from war (e.g. missing persons, someone was killed etc.)?
- e) Have you got a hereditary illness in your family?
- f) When did you marry?

#### **2. Socio-economic status**

- a) What is your profession?
- b) How many hours do you work?
- c) Do you like what you are doing?
- d) Where do you live?
- e) Is your house comfortable? Do you pay a rent? or do you own the house?
- f) Where do you go for holidays?
- g) Have you got a foreign made at home?
- h) Does (the name of the child) have his own room at home?

#### **3. Family Structure**

- a) How many children do you have?
- b) What are their ages?
- c) What's the order of your children in the family?
- d) Did any events happen lately that affected family life ? (e.g. a death or a birth or an absence)

#### **4. Family Relationships**

- a) How does (the name of the child) behave at home? When does he/she gets angry and why?
- b) What does he do when he/she gets angry?
- c) Does he/she sleep with you at night?
- d) Can he/take care of his/her self ? (dress himself up, eat, bath etc.)
- e) When you are out does he/she search for you?
- f) Did anyone of his/her parents left home for a while?

- g) How much time do you spend with him/her?
- h) What do you do together?
- i) Did you ask help for any specialist about (the child's name)?

### **5. Parents' feelings and thoughts**

- a) What do you think about (the child's name) ? How do you feel about him/her?
- b) What do you think (the child's name) thinks about you? How do you think (the child's name) feels about you?
- c) What does your partner think about (the child's name)? How does she/he feel about (the child's name) ?
- d) What do you think (the child's name) thinks about your partner?
- e) Do you punish him? How?

### **6. Relationship with school**

- a) How often do you come to school?
- b) To who do you usually speak?
- c) What do you discuss with his/her teacher?

### **7. Life Satisfaction**

- a) Are you satisfied with your life?
- b) What would you like to change?
- c) What are you afraid most?
- d) What would you wish for (the child's name)?

## APPENDIX 5

### Role-Play Script

**(The child and the researcher are sitting on the floor with crossed legs.)**

**R:** Well (the name of the child), today we are going to do a bit of drama. When I put this scarf around my neck I won't be Chrystalla, I will be Nikos. (I put my scarf around my neck and change my voice.)

**R:** *Hi (the name of the child)! I am Nikos. Do you want to know what I did today at school? There is a boy in my class. His name is Kostas. This morning when Kostas was entering the classroom I pushed him and he fell down...boom!...he hurt his knees...Ha ! Ha! I was laughing at him, it was so funny.... I teased him...I was making fun of him...the rest of the children also made fun of him.... Suddenly, the teacher entered the classroom and I stopped. But during the lesson I passed on to all the children a small note: "don't play with Kostas, otherwise...." so now, nobody wants to play with him.*

(I take out my scarf.)

**R:** How does Nikos feel about Kostas ? What does he think about his self? Why do you think Nikos did that? What did he want to achieve? What did Nikos feel about Kostas?

Shall we go on and see what happened next? When I put this scarf around my neck I won't be Chrystalla I will be Nikos again. (I put on my scarf)

**R:** *So, (the name of the child), do you want to know what happened next? Well, the teacher got that note and asked the rest of the class: " who gave that to you?" and because the rest were afraid of the teacher they said: "Nikos did". The teacher got angry with me and punished me. She told me that I wasn't allowed to go out during break and told me to leave my desk and sit alone in the corner....but I don't care....I really don't mind that I am punished... (I take out my scarf)*

So, how does Nikos really feel? Is he telling the truth when he says that he doesn't care about being punished? Lets see then how Nikos really feels about being punished. (I put on my scarf)

*Hi (the name of the child)! Today I am very sad because of what happened to me this morning. I didn't like being punished. I was sitting there alone and everybody was looking at me. I know what they were thinking. They were thinking that they don't want to be my friends. So finally I won't have any friends I will be alone. (I take out my scarf).*

Do you think Nikos could talk to someone about his problem? If for example someone had hit him the day before instead of hitting other children?

Now, lets see how Kostas feels. When I will put this scarf around my neck I won't be Nikos I will be Kostas. (I put on my scarf)

*Hi (the name of the child)! I am so unhappy this morning.....something very bad happened to me....the moment I was entering the classroom this morning Nikos pushed me. I fall down and hurt my knees. I was in pain and the rest of the children were laughing at me, and what is worst Nikos told the rest not to play with me. I was sitting there alone. I was sad. I was in pain. I wanted to cry...to cry...and leave school for ever...it was not the first time that this was happening to me at school and I can't defend my self. Nikos is much stronger than me and has a lot of friends. I don't have any friends to defend me. I don't know who I can talk to... (I take my scarf off).*

How does Kostas feel? To whom he could talk? Could he talk to someone at school? What did Kostas think about him self? What was Nikos feeling when he pushed him? Finally, what did Nikos achieved by this action?

**R:** Very good (the name of the child). Thanks a lot!

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **Olweus' Q-sort questionnaire**

**A. Please circle the number that applies better to you:**

- 1: applies very well to me
- 2: applies well to me
- 3: applies fairly well to me
- 4: applies neither well nor poorly to me
- 5: applies fairly poorly to me
- 6: applies poorly to me
- 7: applies very poorly to me

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I often read books in my free time                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. I prefer to be with children older than I am                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. I often tease other children                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. I prefer to have the same kind of clothes<br>as other children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. I often fight with other children                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. I often think it is fun to make trouble                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7. My father and mother make many<br>decisions for me             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8. I often find my situation difficult<br>and troublesome         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9. In general I think getting angry<br>doesn't pay                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10. I often feel lonely and neglected at school                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11. I have often wanted to be someone else                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12. My mother often tells me to be careful<br>when I am out       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13. I seldom worry about things                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14. I am glad when people say I am well<br>brought up             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

15. I can almost always look out for myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. It usually takes along time for me to adjust to something new	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I prefer to be with children who are younger than I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I think it is better to be quiet than to make a fuss if somebody is unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I think it is fun to play football	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I find it difficult to speak up in class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I often have fun with my father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Usually I don't get angry if somebody teases me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I think it is best for children if their parents make decisions for them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Generally, I am fairly sure for myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I don't think there are great differences between boys and girls	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. When I have a disagreement with a teacher, I tend to have a bad conscience afterwards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I nearly always tell my mother what I have been doing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I am usually fairly brave	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Things always seem to be going wrong with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. It is often nice not to have to make decisions for myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. I am often angry with myself for acting stupidly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. I think a boy/girl should be able to take a few knocks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. I am often afraid of getting sick	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



34. I would like to change many things about myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. When a child teases me, I try to give him/her a good beating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. I often wish I were younger	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. If I get angry I usually don't show it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. I give up quite easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. If a teacher has promised we will have some fun but then changes his mind, I protest strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. I am usually uneasy when I am home alone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. I get angry with other people easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. I have wanted to run away from home several times	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. When an adult is grouchy toward me, I make an effort to be extra friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. I prefer to get out of the way when somebody is picking on me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. I am often afraid that something unpleasant will happen to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. When I will grow up, I want to be like my father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. I would rather be with adults than children my own age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. Usually, it is easy for me to make up my mind	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49. Now and then I have almost wished I were a girl/boy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. My mother lets me stay home from school whenever I feel tired or out of sorts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51. When an adult is annoyed with me, I usually feel that I am at fault	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52. In general, I am satisfied with myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 53. I like to have a grown up around  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 54. I often do what I want without<br>bothering about what other people think | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 55. I think fighting is silly   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 56. I often feel like a failure   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 57. When a teacher criticize me, I<br>tend to answer back and protest         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Thank you.

## APPENDIX 7

# The Self Image Profile For Children (SIP-C)

Richard J Butler

Name:

Age:

Sex:    Male / Female

Date:

Please read the instructions carefully. If you do not understand, ask for help.

1. First, please shade the box ☐ according to *how you think you are using* the 0 - 6 scale where, 0 means 'not at all' like the description and 6 means 'very much' like the description.

2. Then, put a star in the box ☐ according to *how you would like to be*.

There are no right or wrong answers. Use any number along the scale to show how you think of yourself.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW LINE

SI + ve	SUM OF ITEMS 1 - 12	
SI - ve	SUM OF ITEMS 14 - 25	
SD	SCORE ON ITEM 13	
SE	SUM OF DISCREPANCY SCORES	





































		Not At All			Very Much			DISCREPANCY SCORES
		0	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Kind							
2	Happy							
3	Friendly							
4	Funny							
5	Helpful							
6	Hard Working							
7	Lively							
8	Honest							
9	Like Sport							
10	Brainy							
11	Sensitive							
12	Like the Way I Look							
13	Feel Different from Others							
14	Lazy							
15	Get Picked On							
16	Moody							
17	Mess About in Class							
18	Shy							
19	Always in Trouble							
20	Cheeky							
21	Teases Others							
22	Easily Upset							
23	Bossy							
24	Bad Tempered							
25	Get Bored Easily							

























## Appendix 8: Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC)

### What I Am Like

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Age\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_ School Year\_\_\_\_\_

























	<b>Really True for me</b>	<b>Sort of True for me</b>		<b>Really True for me</b>	<b>Sort of True for me</b>
<b>Demo</b>					
a.			Some kids <i>like</i> to <i>play outside</i> in their spare time.	BUT	Other kids <i>like</i> to <i>watch T.V.</i> in their spare time.
b.			Some kids really <i>like school</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> really <i>like school</i> .
<b>Practise</b>					
i)			Some kids really <i>like football</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> <i>like football</i> very much.
ii)			Some kids have <i>red hair</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> have <i>red hair</i> .
iii)			Some kids often <i>forget</i> to <i>do</i> their <i>homework</i> .	BUT	Other kids usually <i>remember</i> to <i>do</i> their <i>homew</i>

























	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Really True for me	Sort of True for me
1.			Some kids feel that they are very <i>good</i> at their <i>school work</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>worry</i> about whether they can do their <i>school work</i> .		
2.			Some kids find it <i>hard</i> to <i>make friends</i> .	BUT	Other kids find it's pretty <i>easy</i> to <i>make friends</i> .		
3.			Some kids do very <i>well</i> at all kinds of <i>sports</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> feel they are very good at <i>sports</i> .		
4.			Some kids are <i>happy</i> with the way they <i>look</i> .	BUT	Other kids are <i>not happy</i> with with the way they <i>look</i> .		
5.			Some kids often do <i>not</i> like the way they <i>behave</i> .	BUT	Other kids usually <i>like</i> the way they <i>behave</i> .		
6.			Some kids are often <i>unhappy</i> with <i>themselves</i> .	BUT	Other kids are often <i>pleased</i> with <i>themselves</i> .		

























	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Really True for me	Sort of True for me
7.			Some kids feel they are <i>just as clever</i> as other children their age.	BUT	Other kids aren't so sure and wonder if they are <i>as clever as other children</i> their age.		
8.			Some kids have <i>a lot of friends</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> have very many <i>friends</i> .		
9.			Some kids <i>wish</i> they could be a lot <i>better at sports</i> .	BUT	Other kids feel they are <i>good enough</i> at sports.		
10.			Some kids are <i>happy</i> with their <i>height</i> and <i>weight</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>wish</i> their <i>height</i> or <i>weight</i> were <i>different</i> .		
11.			Some kids usually <i>do</i> the <i>right thing</i> .	BUT	Other kids often <i>don't</i> do the <i>right thing</i> .		
12.			Some kids <i>don't like</i> the way they are leading <i>their life</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>do like</i> the way they are leading <i>their life</i> .		



	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Really True for me	Sort of True for me
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are quite <i>slow</i> at finishing their <i>school work</i> .	BUT	Other kids can do their <i>school work quickly</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids would <i>like to have</i> a lot <i>more friends</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>have</i> as <i>many friends</i> as they <i>want</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids <i>think</i> they could <i>do well</i> at just about any <i>new sport</i> they haven't tried before.	BUT	Other kids are <i>afraid</i> they might <i>not do well</i> at <i>new sports</i> they haven't ever tried.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids <i>wish</i> their <i>body</i> was <i>different</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>like</i> their <i>body</i> the way it is.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids usually <i>behave</i> the way they know <i>they should</i> .	BUT	Other kids often <i>don't behave</i> the way they know <i>they should</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are <i>happy</i> with <i>themselves</i> as a person.	BUT	Other kids are often <i>not happy</i> with <i>themselves</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Really True for me	Sort of True for me
19.			Some kids often <i>forget</i> what they <i>learn</i> .	BUT	Other kids can <i>easily remember</i> things they <i>learn</i> .		
20.			Some kids are always doing things with <i>a lot</i> of kids.	BUT	Other kids usually do things by <i>themselves</i> .		
21.			Some kids feel they are <i>better</i> at sports than other children their age.	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> feel they can play sports as well as others their age.		
22.			Some kids <i>wish</i> how they <i>look</i> was <i>different</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>like</i> how they <i>look</i> .		
23.			Some kids usually get <i>in trouble</i> because of the things they do.	BUT	Other kids usually <i>don't</i> do things that get them <i>in trouble</i> .		
24.			Some kids <i>like</i> the sort of <i>person</i> they are.	BUT	Other kids often <i>wish</i> they were <i>someone else</i> .		

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Really True for me	Sort of True for me
25.			Some kids <i>do very well</i> at their <i>class work</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> do very well at their <i>class work</i> .		
26.			Some kids <i>wish</i> that <i>more children</i> their age <i>liked</i> them.	BUT	Other kids feel that <i>most children</i> their age <i>do like</i> them.		
27.			In <i>games</i> and <i>sports</i> some children usually <i>watch</i> and don't play.	BUT	In <i>games</i> and <i>sports</i> other kids usually <i>play</i> and don't watch.		
28.			Some kids <i>wish</i> something about their <i>face</i> or <i>hair</i> looked <i>different</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>like</i> their <i>face</i> and <i>hair</i> the way they are.		
29.			Some kids <i>do things</i> they <i>know</i> they <i>shouldn't</i> do.	BUT	Other kids <i>hardly ever do things</i> they <i>shouldn't</i> do.		
30.			Some kids are <i>very happy</i> being the way <i>they are</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>wish</i> they were <i>different</i> .		

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Really True for me	Sort of True for me
31.			Some kids have <i>difficulties working out</i> the answers at school.	BUT	Other kids can nearly <i>always work out</i> the answers at school.		
32.			Some kids are <i>popular</i> . Lots of children their age like them.	BUT	Other kids are <i>not</i> very popular. Not many children their age like them.		
33.			Some kids <i>don't</i> do well at new outdoor games.	BUT	Other kids are <i>good</i> at new outdoor games straight away.		
34.			Some kids <i>think</i> that they are good looking.	BUT	Other kids <i>think</i> that they are <i>not</i> very good looking.		
35.			Some kids <i>behave</i> themselves very well.	BUT	Other kids often <i>find</i> it hard to behave themselves.		
36.			Some kids <i>are not</i> very happy with the way they <i>do things</i> .	BUT	Other kids <i>think</i> the way they <i>do things</i> is fine.		

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SPECIAL ADAPTATION OF: S. HARTER (1985) SELF PERCEPTION PROFILE

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Geoff Lindsay and Clare Mackie  
CEDAR, University of Warwick,  
Coventry, CV4 7AL

Harter pupil response form 2  
BC /Gatsby Disc 3

Name\_\_\_\_\_





















Age\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

School Year\_\_\_\_\_

**HOW IMPORTANT ARE THESE THINGS TO HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF AS A PERSON?**

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me	To feel good as a person.....		Sort of True for me	Really True for me	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids think it <b>is</b> <b>important.</b>	BUT	Doing <i>well</i> at <i>school work</i> : Other kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important.</b>	BUT	Having <i>a lot</i> of <i>friends</i> : Other kids think it <b>is</b> <b>important.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids think it <b>is</b> <b>important.</b>	BUT	Being <i>good</i> at <i>sports</i> : Other kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids think it <b>is</b> <b>important.</b>	BUT	Being <i>good looking</i> : Other kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids think it <b>is</b> <b>important.</b>	BUT	<i>Behaving well</i> : Other kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me	To feel good as a person.....			Sort of True for me	Really True for me
9.			Some kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important</b> .	BUT	Getting <i>good marks</i> : Other kids think it <b>is important</b> .		
10.			Some kids think it <b>is</b> important.	BUT	<i>Lots of children liking them</i> : Other kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important</b> .		
22.			Some kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important</b> .	BUT	Doing <i>well at athletics</i> : Other kids think that it <b>is important</b> .		
23.			Some kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important</b> .	BUT	<i>How they look</i> : Other kids think it <b>is important</b> .		
24.			Some kids <b>don't</b> think it is <b>important</b> .	BUT	<i>Behaving how they should</i> : Other kids think it <b>is important</b> .		

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SPECIAL ADAPTATION OF: S. HARTER (1985) SELF PERCEPTION PROFILE

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Coventry CV4 7AL

Harter Pupil Importance Form 2  
BC /Gatsby Disc 3

## **Appendix 9**

### **Personal Constructs**

Name: ..... Age: ..... Date :  
.....

#### **1) Elements:**

- a)..... b).....  
c)..... d).....  
e) ..... f) .....  
g) ..... h) .....  
i)..... j).....

#### **2) Constructs :**

- 1) .....  
2) .....  
3) .....

- 1) good with me ( + ) – bad with me (-)  
2) makes me feel good (+) - makes me feel bad (-)  
3) likes being with me (+) – doesn't like being with me (-)  
4) believes I am good (+) – doesn't believe I am good (-)  
5) shouts when he /she gets angry (-) – doesn't shout when he /she gets angry (+)  
6) makes fun of others (-) – doesn't make fun of others (+)  
7) hits when he/she gets angry(-) – doesn't hit when he/she gets angry (+)

